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By N. O. WINTER

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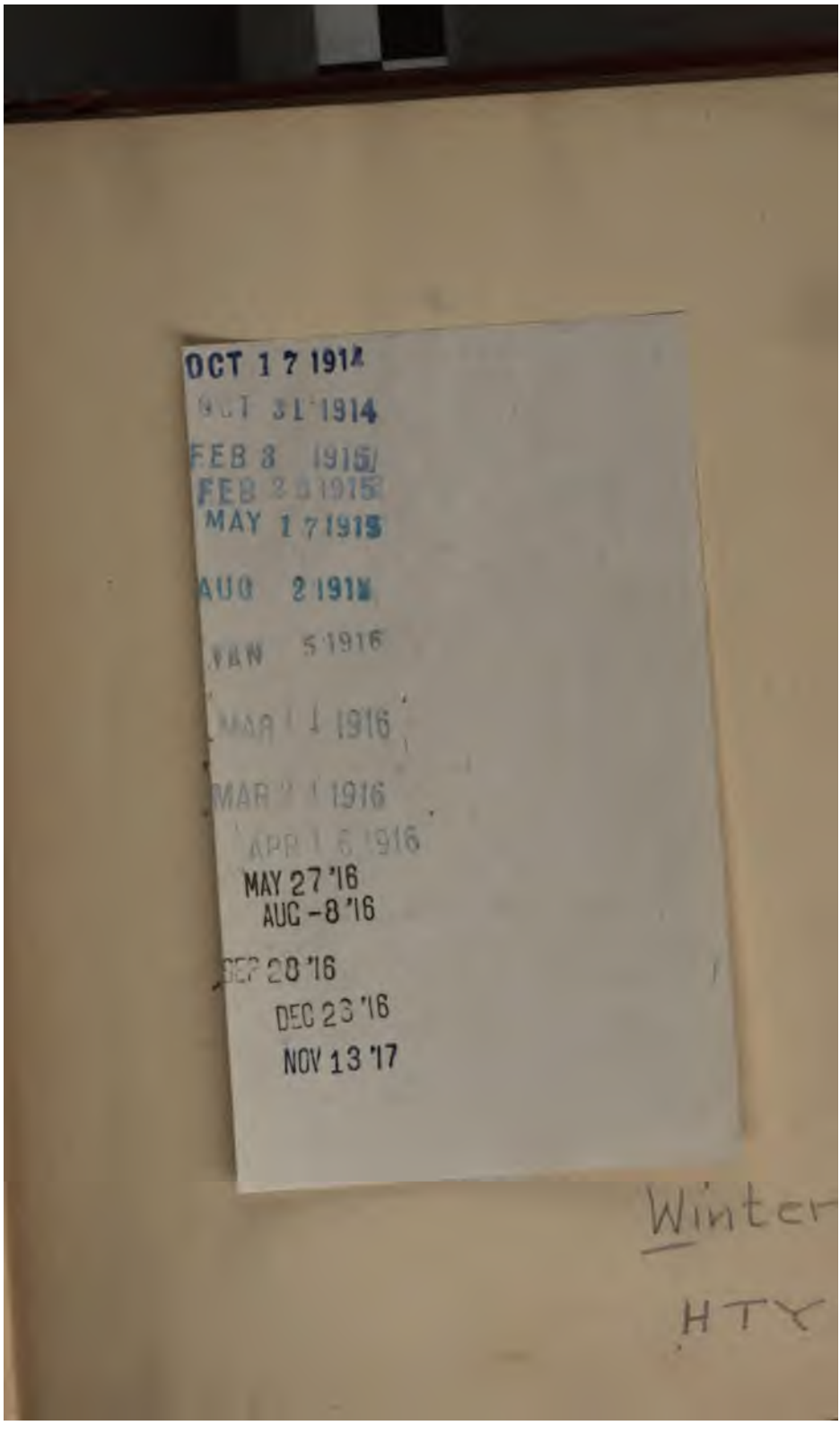
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A BELLE OF TEHUANTEPEC (*See page 180*)

MEXICO AND HER PEOPLE OF TO-DAY

A DESCRIPTION OF THEIR

CHARACTERISTICS, AND OF THEIR HISTORY AND ADVANCEMENT IN THE ARTS AND SCIENCES, AND THE DEVELOPMENT AND RESOURCES OF THEIR COUNTRY

BY

JOHN O. FOSTER

L. C. PAGE & COMPANY PUBLISHERS

MEXICO AND HER PEOPLE OF TO-DAY

AN ACCOUNT OF THE

CUSTOMS, CHARACTERISTICS, AMUSEMENTS, HISTORY AND ADVANCEMENT OF THE MEXICANS, AND THE DEVELOPMENT AND RESOURCES OF THEIR COUNTRY

BY

NEVIN O. WINTER

ILLUSTRATED FROM ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR AND C. R. BIRT

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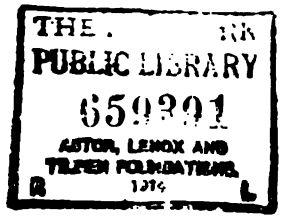

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Second Impression, May, 1908
Third Impression, June, 1910

COLONIAL PRESS
Electrotyped and Printed by C. H. Simonds & Co.
Boston, U. S. A.

TO

My Mother

AND THE MEMORY OF

My Father

PREFACE

MANY books have been written about Mexico, but several of the best works were written a quarter of a century ago and are now out of print. This fact and the developments of the past few years leads the author to believe that there is a field for another book on that most interesting country; a book that should present in readable form reliable information concerning the customs and characteristics of the people of Mexico, as well as the great natural resources of the country and their present state of development, or lack of development.

It has been the aim of the author to make a complete and accurate presentation of the subject rather than to advance radical views concerning and harsh criticism of our next-door neighbours. With this idea in mind he has read nearly every prominent work on Mexico and Mexican history, as well as other current periodical literature concerning that country

during the two years devoted to the preparation of this volume. It is hoped that the wide range of subjects, covering the customs, habits, amusements, history, antiquities, and resources will render the volume of value to any one interested in Mexico and her progress.

If this volume shall aid in any way to a better understanding of Mexico by Americans, or in furthering the present progressive movement in that country, then the author will feel amply repaid for the months of labour devoted to its preparation.

The author wishes to make special acknowledgment of obligation to his friend Mr. C. R. Birt, his companion during the greater part of his travels through Mexico, and to whose artistic sense in selection and grouping the excellence of many of the photographs herewith reproduced is due.

Toledo, Ohio, *September, 1907.*

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MEXICO AND HER PEOPLE TO-DAY

CHAPTER I

AZTEC LAND

PRESCOTT says: "Of all that extensive empire which once acknowledged the authority of Spain in the New World, no portion for interest and importance, can be compared with Mexico; — and this equally, whether we consider the variety of its soil and climate; the inexhaustible stores of its mineral wealth; its scenery, grand and picturesque beyond example; the character of its ancient inhabitants, not only far surpassing in intelligence that of the other North American races, but reminding us, by their monuments, of the primitive civilization of Egypt and Hindoostan; or, lastly, the peculiar circumstances of its conquest, adventurous and romantic as any legend devised by Norman or Italian bard of chivalry."

Mexico is a country in which the old predominates. The American visitor will bring back more distinct recollections of the Egyptian carts and plows, the primitive manners and customs, than he will of the evidences of modern civilization. An educated Mexican whom I met, chided the Americans for this tendency, for, said he, " all that is written of Mexico is descriptive of the Indians and their habits, while progressive Mexico is ignored." This is to a great extent true, for it is the unique and ancient that attracts and holds the attention of the traveller. For this reason tourists go to Egypt to see the pyramids, sphinx and tombs of the Pharaohs.

It is not necessary for the traveller to venture out upon perilous seas to see mute evidences of a life older than printed record. In this land of ancient civilization and primitive customs, there are cities which stand out like oriental pearls transplanted to the Occident from the shores of the Red Sea. Here in Mexico can be found pyramids which are no mean rivals to those great piles on the Egyptian deserts; crumbling ruins of tombs, and palaces, and temples, ornamented in arabesque and grecque designs, not unlike the structures along the banks of the mighty Nile; and the

CRUMBLING RUINS OF THE ANCIENT MEXICAN CIVILIZATION

same primitive implements of husbandry which we have viewed so often in the pages of the large family Bible. Then, as an additional attraction, there is the actual presence of the aborigines, Aztec, Zapotec, and Chichimec, speaking the same language, observing the same ceremonies, and following the same customs which were old when the foreigners came.

There is no history to enlighten us as to the age of these monuments, and there are few hieroglyphics to be deciphered upon which a Rosetta Stone might shed light. The student is led to wonder whether the Egyptian civilization antedated the Mexican, or whether the former is simply the Mexican learning and skill transplanted to the Orient and there modified and improved. It is quite possible, that, while our own ancestors were still barbarians, and little better than savages, swarming over northern Europe, the early races in Mexico had developed a civilization advanced and progressive. They knew how to build monuments which in masonry and carving teach us lessons to-day. They made beautiful pottery and artistic vessels, and they used gold for money and ornaments.

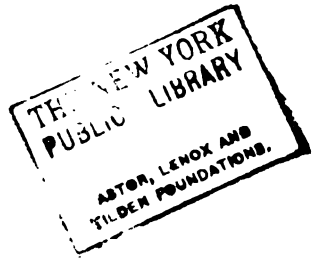
Notwithstanding the fact that for a thou-

sand miles the republics of Mexico and the United States join, the average American knows less concerning Mexico than he does of many European countries; and it is much misunderstood as well as misrepresented. Mexico possesses the strongest possible attractions for the tourist. Its scenic wonders are unsurpassed in any other part of the globe in natural picturesqueness; and no country in Europe presents an aspect more unfamiliar and strange to American eyes, or exceeds it in historic interest.

Vast mountains including snow-capped Popocatapetl and Ixtaccihuatl, the loftiest peaks on the American continent, are seen here amid scenes of tropical beauty and luxuriance. Great cities are found with their customs and characteristics almost unchanged since they were built by the Spaniards; and there are still more ancient cities and temples which were built by prehistoric races.

It is a land of tradition and romance, and of picturesque contrasts. At almost every turn there is something new, unique, interesting, and even startling. It has all the climates from the torrid zone to regions of perpetual snow on the summits of the lofty volcanic peaks, and is capable of producing nearly every fruit found

SNOW CAPPED POPOCATAPETL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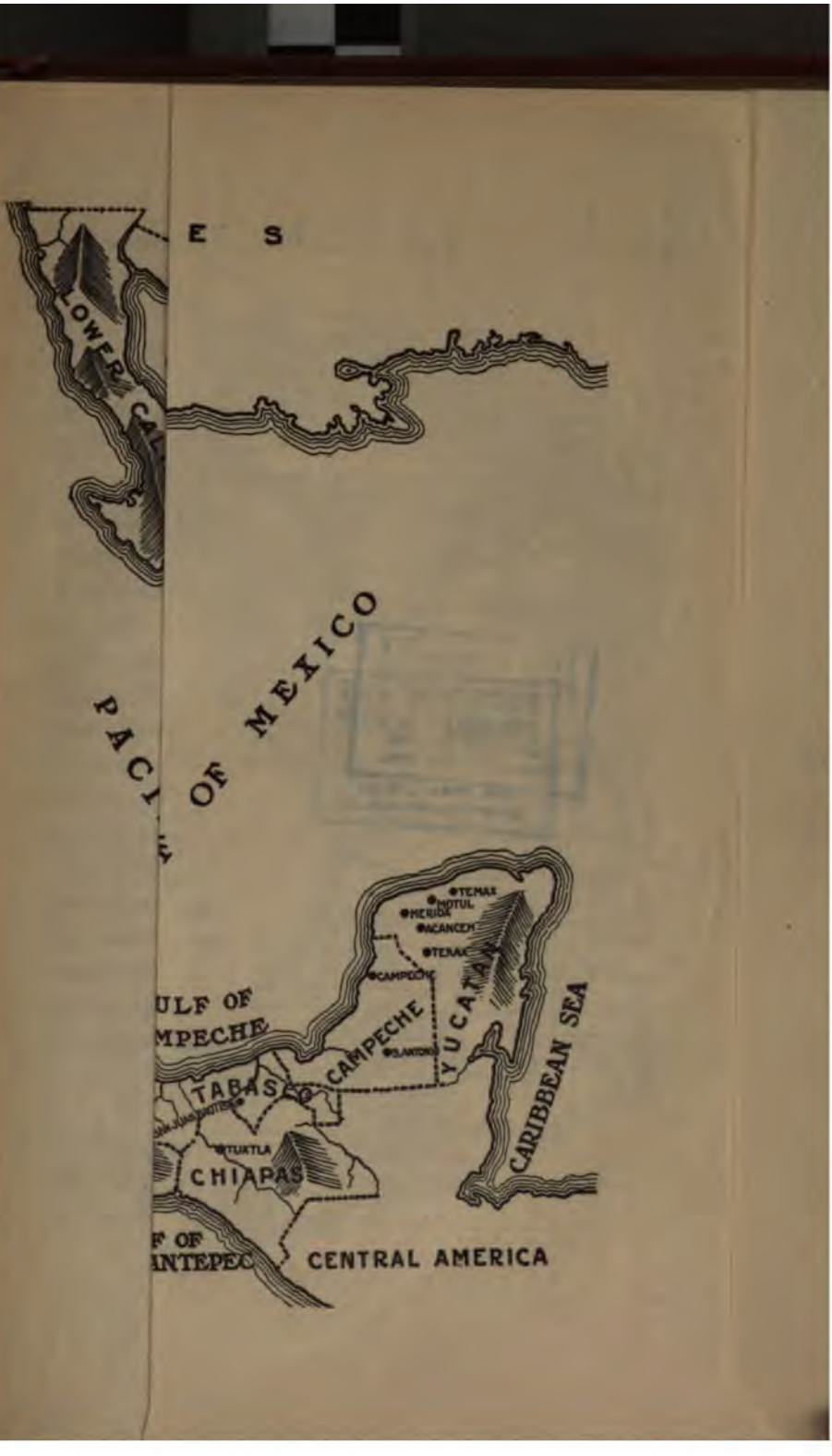
between the equator and the Arctic circle. The softness and sweetness of the air; the broken and ever-varying line of rugged hills against a matchless sky; the beautiful views between the mountain ranges; the care-free life which is omnipresent each add their charm to the composite picture. Dirt is everywhere and poverty abounds, but even these are removed from the commonplace by the brilliant colour on every hand.

F. Hopkinson Smith in "A White Umbrella in Mexico" epitomizes this marvellously attractive country as follows: "A land of white sunshine, redolent with flowers; a land of gay costumes, crumbling churches, and old convents; a land of kindly greetings, of extreme courtesy, of open, broad hospitality. It was more than enough to revel in an Italian sun, lighting up a semi-tropical land; to look up to white-capped peaks, towering into blue; to look down upon wind-swept plains, encircled by ragged chains of mountains; to catch the sparkle of miniature cities, jewelled here and there in oases of olive and orange; and to realize that to-day, in its varied scenery, costumes, architecture, street life, canals crowded with flower-laden boats, market plazas thronged with gaily-dressed natives, faded church inte-

riors, and abandoned convents, Mexico is the most marvellously picturesque country under the sun. A tropical Venice! A semi-barbarous Spain! A new Holy Land."

Mexico contains a greater area than is generally understood. It is shaped very much like a cornucopia with an extreme length of nineteen hundred miles, a breadth of seven hundred and fifty miles, and an area of nearly eight hundred thousand square miles. At its narrowest point, the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, it is only one hundred and twenty-five miles across from ocean to ocean. There is a double range of mountains, one near the Pacific coast and the other near the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, between which lie the great table lands, or plateaus, which constitute a large part of the surface.

Three distinct climates are found in Mexico determined by altitude. Those regions six thousand feet or more above sea level are called the *tierras frias,* or cold lands. This is only a relative term, for the cold does not correspond with that of our own northern states. Though termed " cold," the mean temperature is not lower than that of Central Italy. Those lands lying at an altitude of six thousand feet, down to three thousand feet, above sea level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are termed the *tierras templadas,* or temperate lands. This is a region of perpetual humidity and is semi-tropical in its vegetation and temperature. An altitude from four thousand to six thousand feet in Mexico gives a most delightful climate.

Along both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts there is a more or less broad tract called the *tierra caliente,* or hot land, which is a truly tropical region. Forests of dense growth cover the soil, so thick that it is impossible to penetrate them without blazing your way as you go, and in the midst of which tower trees of magnificent size, such as are to be seen only in the tropics. Here it is that nature is over-prodigal in her gifts; and here it is that the *vomito,* as yellow fever is called, lurks with fatal effect. The winds from the sea generally mitigate the fierce heat, especially if one can remain out of the sun during the middle of the day. Sometimes these winds on the Atlantic coast acquire great velocity, and burst forth upon the unprotected shores with terrific fury as the so-called "northers." There is no true winter here, but there is a rainy season from June to October, and a dry season from November to May, the former being the colder.

"In the course of a few hours," says Pres-

cott, " the traveller may experience every gradation of climate, embracing torrid heat and glacial cold, and pass through different zones of vegetation including wheat and the sugar-cane, the ash and the palm, apples, olives, and guavas." The dwellings vary also. In the hot lands the habitations are constructed of bamboo and light poles open to sun and wind, for the only shelter needed is protection from the elements; in the temperate region the huts are made of heavier poles, and are somewhat more durable; in the higher lands they are built of adobe or stone. Sugar cane and coffee, and even the banana, will grow up to four thousand feet. Wheat grows best at six thousand feet and pines commence here too. At seven thousand feet cactus appears, and the *maguey,* ushering in an entirely different zone. Mexico is a country of extremes of heat and cold, poverty and riches, filth and cleanliness, education and extreme ignorance.

Every schoolboy knows of Loch Katrine and Loch Lomond in bonnie Scotland, and most people are familiar with the location of Lago di Como, in Italy. And yet I should not be surprised if fair-sized towns could be found in the United States where no one could tell whether such a body of water as Lake Chapala

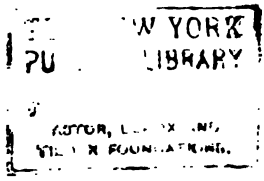
existed or not. As a matter of fact it is ten times as large as all the lakes of Northern Italy combined; and it embraces islands larger than the entire surface of Loch Lomond. Its steely blue waters and rugged shores need only the magic pen of the novelist or poet to tell of its beauties and invest each nook and glen with romance, and the charming villas of Como to make Chapala as picturesque and fascinating as those better known lakes. It is almost a hundred miles long and thirty-three miles wide at the widest point, and covers fourteen hundred square miles. Patzcuaro and Cuitzeo are also lakes of considerable size near Chapala, and all of them are six thousand feet or more above sea level. They only await development and advertising to become popular resorts.

The vast majority of the inhabitants of Mexico are descendants of Indian races who were found there by the Spanish conquerors, and mixtures of those natives with European settlers. Of the fourteen millions of inhabitants only about nineteen per cent. are white; of the remainder, forty-three per cent. are Indians and thirty-eight per cent. mixed. There is a greater resemblance of the Mexican Indians to the Malay races of Asia than to the American In-

dians. Their intensely black hair and eyes, brown complexion, small stature, and even a slight obliquity of the eyes bear a strong resemblance to the Japanese. I have seen it stated that, if a Japanese is dressed in Mexican costume, and a Mexican in Japanese dress, it is difficult to tell which is the Jap and which the Mexican. Students of languages say that there is a strong similarity between the Mexican tongues and oriental languages. The different tribes do not mingle much and seldom intermarry, and this fact may contribute to their physical deterioration.

Whence came this people? No one can answer. It is generally supposed that the Aztecs came from what are now the south-western states of the Union, and wandered into the Valley of Mexico. They were defeated by the tribes then dwelling there, and sought refuge on the shores of Lake Texcoco. There they beheld a golden eagle of great size and beauty resting on a prickly cactus and devouring a serpent which it held in its talons, and with its wings outstretched toward the rising sun. This was the sign for which they had been looking, and there they proceeded to erect their capital. They first built houses of rushes and reeds in the shallow water and lived upon fish, and con-

AN INDIAN MAIDEN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structed floating gardens. As the waters receded somewhat they built more durable structures, including great palaces and temples. They extended their sway over neighbouring races beyond the Valley and conquered tribe after tribe, although never claiming dominion over more than a small portion of the present confines of Mexico. The legend of the eagle and the cactus is still preserved in the coat-of-arms of the present republic..

Of the Aztecs and their history prior to the conquest little is known, except that the country was called Anahuac. Prescott has made his " Conquest of Mexico " as fascinating as a novel, but he has shown the romantic side based upon knowledge of the most fragmentary character. The writings which pass for history were either written by bigoted priests who could not see anything good in an idolatrous people, and who, to please the leaders, painted the Aztecs in blackest colours to justify the cruel measures taken, or they were written by Spaniards who never visited the country of which they presumed to write. As it has been said, " a most gorgeous superstructure of fancy has been raised upon a very meagre foundation of fact." Their civilization was in many respects marvellous and far ahead of that of any

other race on the western hemisphere. Under the Montezumas they had grown into a powerful nation, and their rule was one of barbaric splendour and luxury.

The Aztecs succeeded an older race called the Toltecs who were also far advanced in civilization. They were nature worshippers and not only did not indulge in human sacrifices, but were averse to war and detested falsehood and treachery. A Toltec noble is said to have instructed his son after the following manner before sending him away from home: "Never tell a falsehood, because a lie is a grievous sin! Speak ill of nobody. Be not dissolute, for thereby thou wilt incense the gods, and they will cover thee with infamy. Steal not, nor give thyself up to gaming; otherwise thou wilt be a disgrace to thy parents, whom thou oughtest rather to honour, for the education they have given thee. If thou wilt be virtuous, thy example will put the wicked to shame."

Both of these races were also great builders and sculptors and had cultivated the art of picture-writing. They were well housed, decently clothed, made cloth, enjoyed vapour baths, maintained schools, and had a large assortment of household gods. They mined some,

and in agriculture, at least, were far ahead of the Mexicans of to-day.

The vandalism of the Spaniards in destroying the writings and other records of the early races is rebuked by Prescott as follows: "We contemplate with indignation the cruelties inflicted by the early conquerors. But indignation is qualified with contempt when we see them thus ruthlessly trampling out the sparks of knowledge, the common boon and property of mankind. We may well doubt which has the strongest claim to civilization, the victor or the vanquished."

The Mexico of to-day cannot be understood without looking for a moment at its settlement and the manner of the conquest. The Spanish *conquistadores* who flocked to these shores with Cortez were a different race from those early settlers, who, persecuted and denied liberty of conscience in the land of their birth, sought a new home on our own hospitable shores. With the union of the crowns of Castille and Aragon by the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella, and the discovery of the New World, Spain had suddenly leaped to the front, and become, for a time at least, the greatest nation of the day. Ships were constructed in great numbers and

sent out, filled with voyagers, "towards that part of the horizon where the sun set."

In the sixteenth century she had practically become the mistress of the seas and the most powerful nation in the world. Her soldiers were brave and the acknowledged leaders of chivalry, but the curse of the Spaniards was their thirst for gold, and her decay was rapid. When Cortez and his band of adventurers came to the court of Montezuma, and saw the lavish display of vessels and ornaments made of the precious metal, they thought they had discovered the land of gold for which they were searching. Attracted by the glowing reports of untold wealth, thousands of Spaniards soon followed the first bands of *conquistadores,* and they rapidly spread over the entire country occupied by the Aztecs, ever searching for the mines from whence this golden harvest came. While the leaders were imprisoning and torturing the Aztec chieftains to force them to give up the hiding places of their treasures, the priests, who everywhere accompanied the soldiers, were baptizing thousands into the new faith and using the confessional for the same end. Thus religious bigotry and the mania for worldly riches went side by side, and ever ring-

ing in the ears of both priest and warrior was the refrain:

"Gold! Gold! Gold! Gold!
Bright and yellow, hard and cold."

Shortly after the conquest all the desirable lands were parcelled out among the invaders and the few Indian *caciques* who had helped, with their powerful influence, in their subjugation. The Spaniards rapidly pacified the country, for the Aztec masses, however warlike they may have been before the coming of the Spaniards, were subdued by one blow. They were soon convinced that opposition to the power of Spain was useless. The priests, also, through their quickly acquired influence, taught submission to those whom God, in His infinite wisdom, had placed over them. Chiefs who would not yield otherwise were bribed to use their power over their vassals in favour of the Spaniards. Thus by force, bribery, intrigue, diplomacy, treachery, and even religion, the Indians were reconciled and the spirit of opposition to the Spaniards broken. The result was a new and upstart nobility who ruled the country with an iron hand in the course of a few decades; and the natives, with the exception

of the chiefs, were made vassals of these newly made nobles.

An era of building followed, in which great palaces after the *grandiose* ideas of Spain were constructed by Indian workmen. Churches were built with lavish hand, for these nobles thought to atone for their many misdeeds by constructing and dedicating places of worship to Almighty God, who, according to the teaching of the priest, was the God of the poor, oppressed Indian as well as the God of the haughty Spaniard who had enslaved him. As one writer has said: "When John Smith and his followers were looking for gold mines in Virginia and the Pilgrims were planting corn in Massachusetts, an empire had been founded and built up on the same continent by the Spaniards, and the most stupendous system of plunder the world ever saw was then and there in vigorous operation." Cortez was searching for "a people who had much gold" of which he had heard. It was not God but gold that drew him in his campaign over Mexico. He did not aim to Christianize the natives so much as enrich himself and acquire empire for his sovereign, and religion was a subterfuge plausible and popular in that age.

"I die," said the patriot Hidalgo, when about

to be executed in 1811, " but the seeds of liberty will be watered by my blood. The cause will not die; that still lives and will surely triumph." His prediction came true, and freedom from the Spanish yoke of three centuries was secured ten years later after the shedding of much blood. Peace did not follow at once, however, for in the fifty years succeeding the declaration of independence the form of government changed ten times, and there were fifty-four different rulers, including two emperors and a number of dictatorships. Special privileges are difficult to eradicate when established by long usage, and those enjoying them yield only to force. The Church, which had imposed on the people such a vast number of priests, friars, and nuns, and had acquired the most of the wealth of the country, clung with the grip of death to its privileges and property. The changes came gradually, but it has been a half-century since the Church and State were formally separated by constitutional amendment. The bigoted and despotic Romanism, which was allied with the Spanish aristocracy, has at last been subdued. A more tolerant spirit is springing up towards other forms of religious faith through the efforts of a powerful and liberal government. Education is also freeing the peo-

ple from the superstitious ignorance which has hitherto prevailed in most parts of Mexico. There are occasional outbursts of fanaticism, but they are quickly suppressed, and the government is making an honest effort to preserve freedom of worship to all faiths.

The United States of Mexico is a federation composed of twenty-seven states, two territories, and the federal district in which the capital is located. The states are sovereign within themselves and are held together under a federal constitution very much like our own. This constitution was adopted on the 5th of February, 1857, and its semi-centennial was recently celebrated with a few of the original signers present. There is a congress composed of two bodies, the Senate and Chamber of Deputies which meets twice each year. Each state is represented in the former by two senators and in the latter by one representative from each forty thousand of population. The right of suffrage is restricted so that only a small proportion of the population can exercise that privilege. They have not really reached popular government, and politics, as we know them in the United States, do not exist. A presidential election scarcely causes a ripple on the surface. President Diaz is no doubt the popular

choice, but comparatively few votes were cast at the last election. The rule of the present government although decidedly autocratic is beneficient, and has redounded to the good of the country. Though practically an absolute ruler, the President has always acted through the regularly organized channels of a complete form of republican government, and outwardly, at least, there is no semblance of a dictatorship.

Mexico is a country of great natural resources and possibilities which have been only partially developed. Its soil is remarkably fertile and could support five times, and, if water could be found on the plateaus, ten times the present population. And I say this notwithstanding the fact that one man has said that Mexico is the poorest country south of Greenland, and north of the south pole. The flora of the country, among which are many useful and medicinal plants, is exceedingly rich and varied. More species of fibre plants are found there than in any other country, and the commercial utility of these plants is not yet fully appreciated. In no country has there been greater waste of natural resources than the Spanish conquerors caused in Mexico. It is as a mining country that Mexico has been best known and the Mexican silver mines have been

famous ever since the discovery of the New World, and they are still the greatest single source of wealth. Some of them which have been worked for centuries are still yielding small fortunes in the white metal each year.

The Mexican has his own view of the United States and does not call our boasted progress and much-vaunted civilization, with its hurry, brusque ways and the blotting out of the finer courtesies, an improvement. He appreciates our mechanical contrivances and electrical inventions, but prefers to enjoy life after his own fashion and in the way he thinks that God intended in order to keep men happy. The civilization received by Mexico in the sixteenth century was looked upon as equal to the best in existence, and to this was added an ancient civilization found in the country. From these sources a manner of living has been evolved which bears evidences of culture and refinement. This system has flowed on through the intervening centuries, undisturbed by the march of progress, until the last quarter of a century. Things cannot be changed to Anglo-Saxon standards in a year, or two years, or even a generation. To Americanize Mexico will be a difficult if not impossible undertaking, and there are no signs of such a transition.

Americans who live there fall into Mexican ways and moral standards more frequently than Mexicans are converted to the American point of view. The influence of traditions, customs, and climate, and the centuries-old habit of letting the morrow take care of itself is too great to be overcome.

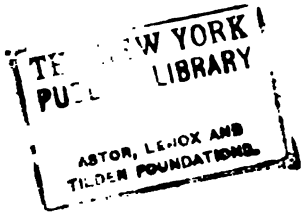
CHAPTER II

ACROSS THE PLATEAUS

THE traveller going to Mexico by rail will discover that that country begins long before the border is reached. While travelling over the great state of Texas, where the dialect of the natives is as broad as the rolling prairie round about, he is reminded of our southern neighbour by the soft accents of the Spanish language, or by the entrance into the coach of a Mexican cowboy with his great hat and picturesque suit. Leaving beautiful San Antonio, which is a Spanish city modernized, it is but a few hours until the train crosses the muddy Rio Grande at Laredo and, after passing an imaginary line in the centre of the stream, enters the land of burros and *sombreros,* a land of mysterious origin and vast antiquity.

The custom officials are very polite and soon affix the necessary label " despachado " to the baggage. " *Vamonos* " (we go) replaces the

"THE LAND OF BURROS AND *SOMBREROS*"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familiar "all aboard," and the train moves out over a country as flat and dreary as a desert. By whichever route the traveller enters Mexico, the journey is very uninteresting for the first half day. There is nothing to relieve the monotony except the telephone and telegraph poles, with their picturesque cross-arms standing out on the desert waste like giant sentinels. There is no vegetation except the prickly pear, cactus, and feather duster palms, for frequently no rain falls for years at a time. It seems almost impossible that anything can get moisture from the parched air of these plains. But nature has strange ways of adapting life to conditions. A good illustration of this is seen in the *ixtle*, a species of cactus whose leaves look as if they could not absorb any moisture because of a hard varnish-like coat. Whenever any water in the form of dew or rain appears, however, this glaze softens and the plant absorbs all the moisture available and then glazes over again as soon as the sun comes out.

There is very little life here. Sometimes at the stations a few adobe huts are seen where dwell the section hands, and a few goats are visible which, no doubt, find the prickly pear and cactus with an occasional railroad spike

thrown in for variety, much more satisfying than an unchanging diet of tin cans such as falls to the lot of the city goat. The mountain ranges then appear, and never is the traveller out of sight of them in Mexico. On either side, toward the east and toward the west, is a range with an ever varying outline, sometimes near, then far, — advancing and retreating. At a distance in this clear atmosphere their rough features are mellowed by a soft haze into amethyst and purple; nearer they sometimes rise like a camp of giants and are the most fantastic mountains that earthquakes ever made in sport, looking as if nature had laughed herself into the convulsions in which they were formed.

The Mexican National Railway follows a broad road that was formerly an Indian trail, and the track crosses and recrosses this highway many times. By this same route it is probable that early Mexican races entered that country and marched down toward the Valley of Mexico. It was by this way that General Taylor invaded the country during the Mexican War and several engagements took place along the line of this railroad.

The first town of any size is Monterey, capital of the state of Nuevo Leon, the oldest and one of the most important cities in Northern

Mexico. It lies in a lovely valley with high hills on every side. It is at a lower altitude than the cities farther south on this line and enjoys a salubrious climate. Monterey is a very much Americanized town and has great smelters, factories, and breweries, but it also boasts of beautiful gardens and some old churches. The Topo Chico hot springs only a few miles away have a great reputation for healing. Here it was, in 1846, that General Taylor overcame a much superior force of the enemy under General Ampudia in a desperate and stubbornly disputed battle lasting several days, the contest being hotly fought from street to street. The Mexican troops entered the houses and shot at the American soldiers from the windows and roofs. It is now a city of more than fifty thousand people.

Leaving Monterey, the road soon begins a gradual ascent to the higher plateaus and reaches the zone called *tierra fria,* or cold country. This name would seem a misnomer to one who hails from the land of snow and ice, for the mean temperature of this "cold land" is that of a perpetual spring such as is enjoyed north of Mason and Dixon's line. It is properly applied to all that part of Mexico which is six thousand feet or more above the

level of the sea and the greater part of the immense central plateaus comes within this designation. These plains which comprise about two-thirds of the entire country, are formed by the great Andes range of mountains which separates into two great *cordillerias* near Oaxaca and gradually grow farther and farther apart as they approach the Rio Grande. The western branch crowds the shore of the Pacific and the eastern follows the coast line of the Gulf of Mexico, but the latter keeps at a greater distance from the sea, thus giving a wider expanse of the hotlands. They are not level table-lands, these *mesas,* as they always slope in some direction. The arid condition follows as a natural course, for the lofty ranges cause the rain to be precipitated on the coast lands except during certain seasons in the year when the winds change. When the rains do come, a miracle is wrought, and the sombre landscape blossoms into a lively green dotted with flowers. It is rare to find such great plains at so high an altitude. Although now almost barren of trees it is probable that in early times these tablelands were covered with a forest growth principally of oak and cypress. This is evidenced by the few groves that yet remain, in which many of the trees are of ex-

traordinary dimensions. The Spaniards completed the spoliation that had been begun by the earlier races.

Saltillo, the next important town, is the capital of the State of Coahuila. It is interesting to Americans, as just a few miles from here and near the railway took place the battle of Buena Vista, at the village of that name. Here the Americans under General Taylor sent double their number of Mexicans under the notorious Santa Anna, flying on February 23rd, 1847.

Still climbing, the road continues toward the capital, passes through a rich mining district, and after the Tropic of Cancer is crossed the traveller is in the Torrid Zone, the spot being marked by a pyramid. Plains, seemingly endless, where for a hundred miles the long stretch of track is without a curve, are traversed, and so dry that wells and water-tanks are objects of interest. It is mostly given up to vast *haciendas.* Some of these estates still remain in the hands of the original families as granted at the time of the conquest.

It was on these vast, seemingly barren plateaus that the *hacienda* reached its highest development. One does not go far south of the Rio Grande before the significance of this

institution in Mexican life becomes apparent. Sometimes when the train stops at a little adobe station with a long name, the traveller wonders what is the need of a station; for there is no town and only a few native huts clustered around the depot. However a glance around the horizon will reveal the towers and spire of a *hacienda* nestling at the foot of the hills perhaps several miles away. In the olden times they took the place of the feudal castles of the middle ages in Europe and in these sparsely settled regions they were especially necessary. Within the high walls which often surround them for protection were centralized the residence of the owner and all of his employees and the necessary buildings to store the products of the soil. The *hacendado's* home was a large, roomy building, for, since there were no inns, the traveller must be entertained and hospitality was of the open-handed sort. The travel-worn wayfarer was welcomed and no questions asked. His wants were supplied and at his departure the benediction "Go, and God be with you," followed him. Even yet at some of these great *haciendas,* where the old-time customs prevail, the bell is rung at mealtime and any one who hears it is welcomed at the table.

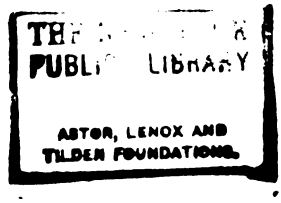
The term *hacienda* has a double meaning, for it is applied both to the great estates and to the buildings. It is a patriarchal existence that is led by these landed proprietors. A thousand peons and more are frequently attached to the estate. Near the station of Villa Reyes is a great *hacienda* which once controlled twenty thousand peons. These must be provided with homes, but a room fifteen feet square is considered sufficient for a family, no matter how large. Little furniture is needed, for they live out of doors mostly, and mats, which can be removed during the day, take the place of cumbersome beds. The *administrador,* who may be an Indian also, and other heads, live better and are housed in larger quarters. A church is always a part of the estate and a priest must be kept to furnish spiritual solace, as well as a doctor to administer to those whose bodies are infirm. Schools are also maintained by most of the proprietors to-day. The peon must be provided with his provisions each week and a little patch of ground for his own use. Around the buildings lie the cultivated fields, and from early morn until the shades of night have fallen, lines of burros are constantly passing in and out laden with wood, corn, vegetables, poul-

try, boxes of freight, and all the other items of traffic which are a part of the life of this great household.

After piercing another of the mountain ranges which intersect the country from east to west, and traversing miles of fertile fields and gardens bearing semi-tropical fruits and vegetables, the road enters a valley and the city of San Luis Potosi is reached. Every country has its Saint Louis, but only one has a Saint Louis of the Treasure, and that is San Luis Potosi, the capital of the state of that name. It lies in a spreading plain of great fertility — made so by irrigation — whose gardens extend to the encircling hills that are rich in the mineral treasures which give the city its name. The San Pedro mines near here alone produce an annual output of several millions. These mines were revealed to Spaniards by an Indian who had become converted to Christianity. There is a mint here that coins several millions of dollars each year.

San Luis Potosi is not a new city nor has its growth been of the mushroom variety. Founded in the middle of the sixteenth century, it preserves to-day in wood and stone the spirit of old Spain transplanted by the conquerors to the new world. Drawn hither by the reports

MARKET SCENE IN SAN LUIS POTOSI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of gold, the Spanish cavalier stalked through the streets of this town in complete mail before the *Mayflower* landed on the shores of Massachusetts. The priests were chanting the solemn service of the church here long before the English landed at Jamestown. Dust had gathered on the municipal library, which now contains a hundred thousand volumes, centuries before the building of the first little red school house in the United States. Before New York had been thought of, the drama of life was being enacted here daily after Castillian models.

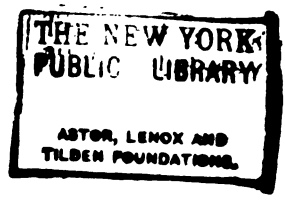
It is a cleanly city and the bright attractive look of its houses is refreshing. A city ordinance compels the citizens to keep up the appearance of their houses, and the colours remind one of Seville. It is pleasant to walk along these streets and through the plazas with their trees and flowers and fountains.

I will never forget my arrival in this city. We reached there about midnight, having been delayed by a wreck; and a number of *mozos* pounced upon the party of Americans who had been dropped by the belated train, each one eager to carry some of the baggage. We were marched through the Alameda, which, for a wonder, adjoins the station, on walks shaded

by broad-leaved, tropical plants, down narrow streets and around several corners to the hotel. Arrived here it was only after several minutes of vigorous knocking that a sleepy-looking porter opened the door, and we entered the hotel and walked down the hall through a line of sleeping servants. The room finally assigned to my friend and myself was thirty-four feet long, sixteen feet wide and about twenty-five feet high, and there were four great windows extending nearly from ceiling to floor and protected by heavy iron bars which made them look like the windows of a prison. It had doubtless been some church property at one time, but whether monastery or convent I did not learn.

Not all this city is pretty however, for distance often lends enchantment, and a closer scrutiny takes away much of this charm. I saw filth on the streets here that can only be duplicated in old Spain itself. There are numerous churches and several of them are quite pretentious and contain some fine paintings. On the façade of one church there is a clock presented by the king of Spain in return for the largest piece of gold ever found in America. San Luis is a thrifty city as Mexican towns go and has numerous manufacturing establish-

COCK-FIGHTING IN MEXICO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ments, including a large smelting works, the Compania Metallurgica, and is an important railroad centre. It is distant from the City of Mexico three hundred and sixty-two miles, and has a population of seventy thousand souls.

This city claims quite a number of American families as residents and many of the storekeepers have been somewhat Americanized, for they actually seem to be on the lookout for business. The state capitol is a very interesting building. While looking through this palace I saw the "line up" of petty offenders who were being sent out to sweep the streets. They were the worst looking lot of *pulque*-drinkers I ever saw and were clothed in rags. Each one was given a handful of twigs with which he was obliged to sweep the streets and gutters, and they were sent out in gangs, each under a police officer. The vices of these people are generally more evident than their virtues. They are inveterate gamblers. Wherever one goes (not alone in San Luis Potosi) fighting cocks are encountered tied by the leg to a stake with a few feet of string. Or they may be carried in the arms of young would-be sports who brag of their birds to any one who will listen. One day I saw a man with a cock whose head was one bloody-looking mass. He had just cut off

the rooster's comb. When I stopped and looked, the Indian laughed as though it were a great joke and said he was "much sick." This was done so that in a fight his opponent could not catch hold of the comb. Itinerant cock-fighters who travel across the country carrying their birds in hollow straw tubes are popular fellows.

Leaving San Luis Potosi at noontime the traveller catches his last glimpse of this city where

> "Upon the whitened city walls
> The golden sunshine softly falls,
> On archways set with orange trees,
> On paven courts and balconies."

The train soon enters a rich agricultural belt and the country becomes more populous. Giant cacti towering straight and tall to a height of fifteen or twenty feet are a common sight.

Dolores Hidalgo where the patriot-priest first sounded the call to liberty and revolution is passed. Then comes Queretero, which occupies a prominent place in Mexican history and is the last city of any size on the way to the capital. Here the treaty of peace between Mexico and the United States was negotiated. In this city Maximilian played the last act in the

tragedy of the empire. He was captured while attempting to escape on June 19th, 1867, and was shot on the Cerro de las Campañas, a little hill just outside the city. With him were shot Generals Miramon and Mejia. Maximilian died with the cry of "*Viva Mexico*" on his lips. There is a magnificent aqueduct here which, because of the high arches, looks like the old ruined aqueduct seen on approaching Rome. The tallest arch is nearly one hundred feet. The entire length of the aqueduct is about five miles and it is still in use. There are a number of factories for cotton goods. Among them is the great Hercules Mill which employs more than two thousand hands. The grounds are laid out in elaborate and beautiful style.

After climbing the mountain range again until an altitude of nearly ten thousand feet has been reached, the descent begins and the beauty of the Valley of Mexico unfolds. Fleeting glimpses of the scene may be caught through little gaps in the mountains until finally the train enters a pass and the traveller has his first view of the City of Mexico. Beyond the glittering towers and domes of the modern city on the site of the ancient Aztec capital lies the bright expanse of the lakes, and still further in the distance is seen the encir-

cling girdle of mountains like a protecting wall around this enchanted scene.

There are many other cities situated on these vast plateaus, for the *tierra fria* has always maintained the bulk of the population in spite of the extraordinary richness of the lowlands. They are growing in size as manufacturing establishments become more numerous. A number of them like Chihuahua, Aguas Calientes, Zacatecas, Guanajuato, Durango, and Leon are interesting cities of from thirty to forty thousand inhabitants and all of them are old. Chihuahua (pronounced Che-wa-wa) is the capital of the state of that name which is the largest state in the republic and is twice as large as the state of Ohio. It has a population of less than four hundred thousand. This will serve to give a little idea of the vastness of these great tablelands and the sparseness of population. It is chiefly devoted to great ranches where hundreds of thousands of cattle are grazed.

It may be interesting to note that cattle ranching originated in this state. All the terms used on the range and roundup are of Spanish origin and are the same that have been employed for centuries. One man here is the owner of a cattle ranch covering seventeen mil-

lion acres. The traveller might journey for days and cross ranges of mountains and not pass beyond his princely domain. There are a number of cattle ranches of from one to two million acres and a few Americans are now entering the field here since the public domain in the United States has dwindled so much.

Two cities, Guadalajara and Puebla, have long disputed for the honour of second city in the republic. Puebla is situated southeast of the capital and is a city of tiles, for tiles are used everywhere from the domes of churches to floors for the devout to kneel upon. It is the capital of the richest state in the republic and has probably seen more of the vicissitudes of war than any other city. It has been captured and occupied successively by Spaniards, Americans and French and by revolutionists times without number. This city was the scene of General Zaragossa's victory on May 5th, 1862, when he repulsed the French forces just outside the city's gates. This victory is celebrated each year as the "*cinco de Mayo*" (Fifth of May) and is the great anti-foreign day. Formerly foreigners did not show themselves on the street on this day, but that antagonistic sentiment has disappeared. In 1906 because of labour disturbances for which American

agitators were blamed trouble was feared on this day, but it passed off without an unpleasant incident. This city was founded as early as 1532. Its history is romantic and full of legends recounting the many visits of the angels. Angels appeared one night and staked out the city. Again, while the cathedral was being built, the angels came after nightfall when the city was wrapped in slumber and built a great part of the tower. At another time the angels were marshalled in mighty hosts just over the city. The people can even point out to you the very places where the angelic visitors roosted. The ecclesiastical records vouch for these appearances of the heavenly visitors and the people devoutly believe in them.

Puebla has wide streets — for Mexico — and many beautiful plazas with flowers and fountains. It is also noted for its bull-fights and has two bull-rings. These are in use nearly every Sunday and frequently for the benefit of or in honour of some church feast or departed saint. The public buildings are very creditable and the city contains good schools and hospitals. A goodly number of foreigners live here, especially Germans. I have noticed that the Germans affiliate with the Mexicans

much better than Americans generally do. One reason is that they come here to establish their permanent residence, while Americans, like the Chinese, desire to make their fortunes and then return to the land of their birth to spend their later days.

Puebla has become quite a manufacturing city and especially of cotton goods, paper, flour and soaps. Onyx and marble are quarried near here, and a large number of workmen are employed in the quarries and in the establishments preparing these materials for the market. Several railroads now reach this city, and its importance as an industrial centre is increasing each year.

All kinds of grains that are produced in the temperate zones will grow on the tablelands of Mexico wherever there is sufficient rain or water to be obtained by irrigation. A constantly increasing amount of acreage is being made available through the extension of the irrigation system, but its possibilities are only beginning to be realized. Corn, which is such a great article of food with the Mexicans, is by far the most valuable agricultural product and several hundred million bushels are produced each year. Wheat was first introduced in Mexico by a monk who planted a few grains

that he had brought with him. This grain is now raised quite extensively in some districts but frequently there is not enough for even local consumption. Cotton is also produced in a number of the states.

Mexico is especially rich in fibre-producing plants and no country in the world has so many different varieties. All of these belong to the great cactus, or *agave*, family. The value of the cactus has never been fully appreciated but new uses are being found for it constantly, and new kinds with valuable qualities are being discovered in Mexico almost yearly. Perhaps the most valuable plant of this family that is being cultivated in Mexico to-day is that species of the *agave* that produces the valuable henequen fibre of commerce. This plant very much resembles the *maguey* and grows on the thin, rocky, limestone soil of Yucatan. From this fibre is made most of the binder twine and much of the rope used in the United States. It has the threefold qualities of strength, pliability and colour. In the past twenty years the cultivation of henequen has grown to enormous proportions, and some of the planters have become millionaires almost rivalling the famous bonanza kings of olden times. The amount of henequen, or sisal, fibre exported to the United

THE *MAGUEY*

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States from 1880 to 1905 was nine million, two hundred and nineteen thousand, two hundred and fifteen bales at an estimated value of $300,988,072.66. In 1902 the exports reached a maximum, and amounted to $34,185,275. All of this fibre is exported through the port of Progreso.

Several species of the cactus family are being experimented with, and it is claimed that they will produce an excellent quality of paper pulp. This may help to solve the problem that now bothers paper manufacturers as the forests of spruce disappear before the woodsman's ax. The graceful *maguey*, the *agave americana*, is cultivated almost everywhere on the plateau lands. It also produces a valuable fibre, but this plant is not cultivated primarily for that purpose. The ancient races used the thorns for pins and needles; the leaves furnished a kind of parchment for their writings and thatch for their roofs; and the juice when fermented made a — to them — most delicious drink. On the plains of Apam just east of the Valley of Mexico and north of Puebla the cultivation of the *maguey* has reached the highest development.

The good housewife in the United States who carefully nourishes the century plant, hoping that at least her descendants will have the

pleasure of seeing it blossom at the end of a hundred years, would be surprised to see the immense plantations consisting of thousands of this same plant growing here. The plant, commonly called the *maguey,* is a native of Mexico and grows to great size. It flourishes best in rocky and sandy soil and is quite imposing in appearance. Its dark green, spiked leaves which lift themselves up and spread out in graceful curves, sometimes reach a length of fifteen feet, and are a foot in breadth and several inches thick. It requires from six to ten years for the *maguey* to mature on its native heath. When that period arrives a slender stalk springs up from the centre of these great leaves, twenty to thirty feet high, upon which a great mass of small flowers is clustered. This supreme effort exhausts the plant and, its duty to nature having been performed, it withers and dies.

This is not the purpose for which the *maguey* is raised on the big plantations where the rows of graceful century plants stretch out as far as the eye can reach in unwavering regularity. On these plantations the *maguey* is not permitted to flower. The Indians know, by infallible signs, almost the very hour at which it is ready to send up the central stalk, and it is

then marked by an overseer with a cross. The stalk is now full of the sap which is the object of its culture. Other Indians follow up the overseer and, making an incision at the base of the plant, extract the central portion, leaving only the rind which forms a natural basin. Into this the sap, which is called *agua miel,* or honey-water, and which is almost as clear as water and as sweet as honey, collects. So quickly does this fluid gather that it is found necessary to remove it two or three times per day. The method of gathering this sap is extremely primitive. The Indian is provided with a long gourd at the lower end of which is a horn. He places the small end, which is open, in the liquid and, applying his lips to an opening in the large end, sucks the sap up into the gourd. The sap is then emptied into a receptacle swung across his back which is made of a whole goat-skin or pig-skin with the hair on the inside. The *maguey* plant will yield six or more quarts of this "honey-water" in a day and the supply will continue from one to three months. It is then exhausted and withers and decays. However, a new shoot will spring up from the old roots without replanting.

This innocent looking and savoury sap is then taken to a building prepared for the pur-

pose, and there poured into vats made of cow-hides stretched on a frame. In each vat a little sour liquor called "mother of *pulque*" has been poured. This causes quick fermentation and in a few hours the *pulque* of the Mexican is ready for the market. It is at its best after about twenty-four hours fermentation. It then has somewhat the appearance and taste of stale buttermilk and a rancid smell. After more fermentation it has the odour of putrid meat. The skins in which it is carried increase this disagreeable odour. The first taste of *pulque* to a stranger is repellant. However, it is said that, contrary to the general rule, familiarity breeds a liking. Great virtues are claimed for it in certain ailments and it is said to be wholesome. However this is not the reason why the peons drink *pulque* in such great quantities. Several special trainloads go in each day to the City of Mexico over one road, besides large amounts over other routes and it is a great revenue producer for the railroads. The daily expenditure for *pulque* in the City of Mexico alone is said to exceed twenty thousand dollars. Physicians say that the brain is softened, digestion ruined and nerves paralyzed by a too generous use of this liquor. Many employers of labour will not employ labourers from the

pulque districts if they can possibly get them from other sources. *Tequila* and *Mescal* are two forms of ardent spirits distilled from a juice yielded by the leaves and root of the *maguey*. They are forms of brandy that it is best for the traveller to leave alone.

CHAPTER III

THE CAPITAL

THE City of Mexico represents progressive Mexico. In it is concentrated the wealth, culture and refinement of the republic. It is the political, the educational, the social and the commercial centre of the whole country. It is to Mexico what Paris is to France. In fact it would be Mexico as Paris would be France. The same glare and glitter of a pleasure-loving metropolis are found here, and within the same boundaries may be seen the deepest poverty and most abject degradation.

"Wait until you get to the City of Mexico," said an educated Mexican to me as we were crossing the sparsely-settled table-lands of northern Mexico, where the only inhabitants are Indians. The Mexicans are proud of their city and are pleased to have it likened to the gay French capital, for their ideals and tastes are fashioned after the Latin standard rather than the American. The French, they say,

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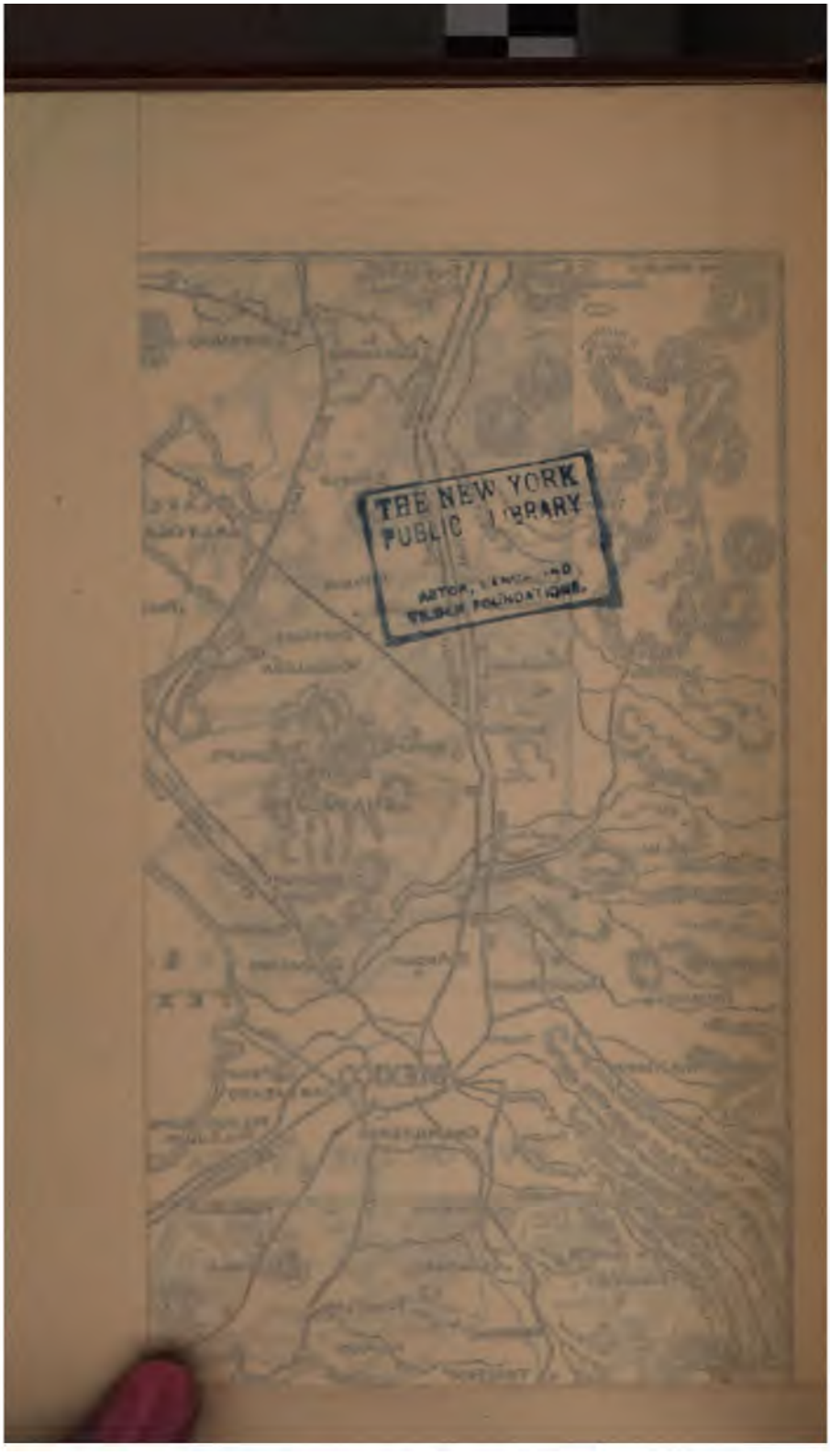
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have the culture and can embrace *a la Mexicana,* which is done by throwing an arm around a friend whom they meet and patting him heartily on the back. They prefer the easy-going, wait-a-while style of existence to the hurried, strenuous life of an American city. No people love leisure and the pursuit of pleasure more than our neighbours in the Mexican metropolis. They work during the morning hours, take a noon *siesta,* close up early in the afternoon and are ready for pleasure in the evening until a late hour.

In appearance the capital resembles Madrid more than any other city I have ever seen. The architecture is the Moorish-Spanish style, into which some Aztec modifications have been wrought by the new-world builders. The light, airy appearance of an American city is absent for there are no frame structures anywhere. The square, flat-roofed buildings, with walls thick enough to withstand any earthquake shock, are two or three stories in height and built round a *patio,* or courtyard, the centre of which is open to the sky. The old architects were not hampered by such paltry considerations as the price of lots, and so they built veritable palaces with wide corridors and rooms lofty and huge. Through many of these rooms

you might easily drive a carriage. There are parlours as large as public halls, and throughout all one notes the *grandiose* ideas of the race. The houses, of stone or brick covered with stucco, are built clear up to the sidewalk so that there is no tinge of green in front. The Mexican is not particular about the exterior of his home, but expends his thought and money on the open court within. The plainness of the outside is relieved only by the large gate, or door, which is also the carriage drive-way, and the neat little, iron-grated balconies on which the windows open from the upper stories.

These balconies afford a convenient place for the women of the household to see what is passing on the street, and also for the *senorita,* or young lady, to watch the restless pacing to and fro of the love-stricken youth who is " playing bear " in front of the house. The great doorway, which is carefully barred and bolted at night, and strictly guarded by the porter during the day, is the only entrance to the *patio,* which, in the better class of homes, is adorned with pretty gardens, statuary and fountains. Many of them contain an open plunge bath. Through the wide windows one catches glimpses of fascinating interiors, and through the broad doorways the passer-by on the street gets many a

THE PATIO OF AN OLD RESIDENCE

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pretty view of the courtyards, and of these miniature gardens. One or two rows of living-apartments extend around and above the court, with broad corridors in front handsomely paved with tile, protected by balustrades and adorned with flowers and vines. Above, the red tiles of the roof add a little additional colour to the scene. There are no cellars nor chimneys. The latter were never introduced because of the mildness of the climate. In the courts protected from the winds, the people keep on the sunny side when it is cool and hide from the same orb when it is hot. Charcoal fires are used for cooking and heat when it becomes necessary. Cellars are made impossible because of the marshy nature of the soil.

It will be recalled that Tenochtitlan, the Aztec capital, has been called the New World Venice, whose streets were once canals. It must have been a gay and picturesque scene when the fair surface of its waters was resplendent with shining cities and flowering islets. The waters have since receded until Lake Texcoco, at its nearest point, is three miles distant. Mexico is now a more prosaic city of streets and cross-streets which extend from north to south and from east to west. Some of the principal thoroughfares are broad,

paved with asphalt and well kept; but many are quite narrow, and especially is this true of the streets called lanes, though devoted to business. There is no exclusive residence section, except in the new additions, and many of the homes of the old families are found sandwiched in between stores. It is a difficult matter to become familiar with the names of the streets, for they are more than nine hundred in number, and a street generally has a different name for each block. If several blocks have the same name, as, for instance, Calle de San Francisco, one of the finest streets, and on or near which are some of the largest hotels, finest stores and richest private dwellings, then it is First San Francisco, Second San Francisco, etc.

A few years ago the streets were re-named. All the streets extending east and west were called *avenidas,* and the north and south streets *calles,* each continuous thoroughfare being given but one name. The people, however, in this land of legend and tradition, clung so tenaciously to the former designations that they have practically been restored. Some of the old names of streets commemorated historical events, as, for instance, the Street of the *Cinco de Mayo,* which is in remembrance of the vic-

tory of the Mexicans over the French at Puebla in 1862. Others are named in honour of men noted in the history of Mexico. Many religious terms appear, such as the street of Jesus, Sanctified Virgin, Holy Ghost, Sepulchres of the Holy Sabbath, and the like. Others owe their names to some incident or legend, which is both interesting and mysterious. Of the latter class may be mentioned the Street of the Sad Indian, Lane of Pass if You Can, Street of the Lost Child, Street of the Wood Owls, Lane of the Rat, Bridge of the Raven and Street of the Walking Priest. The Street of the Coffin Makers is now known as the Street of Death. It is a thoroughfare of one block, and is one of the few streets that still preserves its ancient caste, for it is devoted exclusively to the makers of coffins. All of the coffins are made by hand. It is a gloomy street and there are cleaner spots on the face of the earth.

Mexico is a very cosmopolitan city. Its three hundred and seventy-five thousand inhabitants include representatives from nearly every nation of the earth. The Indians are vastly in the majority, and they are the pure and original Mexicans. The creoles, who are descendants of Europeans, generally Spanish, call themselves the Mexicans and rank second in

number. They form the real aristocratic body from whom come the representative Mexicans. They are not all dark, but a blonde is a rare specimen. Most of them have an olive-brown colour, thus showing the mixture of Indian blood, for in early days it was not considered a *mesalliance* for even a Spanish officer of high rank to marry an Aztec maiden of the better class.

The old families cling tenaciously to the great estates, or *haciendas,* many of which have remained intact for centuries. Quite a number can even trace their estates back to the original grants from the king of Spain. Many of these *hacendados,* or landed proprietors, enjoy princely incomes from their lands, and nearly all of them own residences in the capital. They maintain elaborate establishments and keep four times as many servants as would be found in an American house.

The average Mexican does not care for business. Neither is he an inventor or originator, for he is content to live as his ancestors have lived. Nearly all lines of commerce and industry are in the hands of foreigners. The Germans monopolize the hardware trade; the French conduct nearly all the dry goods stores; the Spaniards are the country's grocers; and

the Americans and English control the railroad, electric and mining industries. All these interests centre in the City of Mexico. Railroads are not very numerous until you approach the Valley of Mexico where they converge from all directions. The hum of industry is apparent here as nowhere else in the whole republic. The Mexicans boast of their capital, but they often forget the debt they owe to foreigners, for all the modern improvements have been installed by alien races and outside capital. It is another foreign invasion but with a pacific mission. The American colony alone in that city numbers more than six thousand persons, and the number is constantly increasing. Hatred of the American has almost disappeared, and the incomers are cordially welcomed. There are two flourishing clubs around which the social life of the expatriated Americans centre.

The society of the capital, and indeed of the whole country, is very diverse. What might be said of one class would not apply to another. The differences of dress and customs alone make known the heterogeneousness of the population. They all use the same language and all classes are brought together on a common level in their religion. No other nation has ever

made such complete conquests as Spain. She not only subjugated the lands but forced her language, as well as religion, upon the conquered races. The English have succeeded in extending their sway over a large part of the world, but in no instance have they been able to accomplish these two results with the native population. The priests of Spain went hand in hand with the *conquistadores,* and, within a few generations after the conquest of Mexico by Cortez, the Spanish language was universally used and the Indians were at least nominal Catholics.

The climate of the City of Mexico is delightful. It is neither hot nor cold. It is too far south to be cold and the altitude, seven thousand, four hundred and thirty-four feet above the level of the sea, is too great to be hot. The temperature usually ranges from sixty-five to eighty-five, but sometimes goes as high as ninety, and as low as thirty-five, and frosts occasionally are experienced. The mornings and evenings are cool and at midday it is always hot. There is a great difference in the temperature between the sunny and shady side of the street. Only dogs and Americans take the sunny side, the Mexicans say. The rainy and dry seasons occur with great regularity, the

former lasting from May to October. It is the best season in the year although most visitors go there in winter. The rains always occur in the afternoon and usually cease before dark. At this time, too, all nature takes on a beautiful shade of green which replaces the rather dull landscape of the dry season. There is also a brisk, electric condition of the atmosphere that is decidedly exhilarating and a good tonic.

This mildness of climate has greatly influenced the life of the capital. The streets, except during the noon *siesta*, are full of people at all times. To judge from the crowds, one might think the capital a city of a million people. In the morning the women go to mass garbed in black, generally wearing a black shawl over the head. Occasionally a black lace mantilla is seen half-concealing, half-exposing the olive-brown face, and bright, sparkling eyes of a *señorita*. Shoppers are out and business is active. The women of the wealthier classes sit in their carriages and have the goods brought out to them, or go to a private room where articles are exhibited by clerks. They think that it is unbecoming to stand at the counters, although the American plan of shopping is becoming quite popular in recent years.

About the middle of the afternoon the crowds

again appear, and a little later the streets begin to fill with carriages. Nowhere, not even in Paris, have I observed so many carriages as can be seen here on any pleasant afternoon. They form one continuous, slow-moving line of many miles. The procession moves out San Francisco Street through the Alameda, along the Paseo de la Reforma, and then into the beautiful park surrounding the Castle of Chapultepec which is set with great cypresses, said to antedate the conquest. The cavalcade winds around through the various drives at the base of the rock, along the shores of the lake, past the castle and back to the city. The carriages go out on one side and return on the other, leaving the central portion for riders. It is a sight that never wearies for one to sit on a bench and watch the motley throng of people driving, riding on horseback and promenading. An oriental exclusiveness is observed by ladies of the upper class who always ride in closed carriages. All kinds of vehicles are to be seen, from fine equipages with liveried drivers and footmen, to the poorest cab in the city with its disreputable driver and broken-down horses, fit only for the bull-ring.

There are many horsemen and the Mexicans are always excellent riders. Their horses are

Lilliputian in size but fast and enduring. The saddle, bridle and trappings are frequently gorgeous with their silver ornaments and immense stirrups fancifully worked and shaped. The rider is often a picture wonderful to behold from the heavy silver spurs which he wears, to the sombrero of brown or yellow felt with a brim ten to fifteen inches wide and a crown equally as high, the whole covered with heavy gilt cord formed into a sort of rope. Then there is the dude or fop, who is well named in Mexico. He is called a "*lajartija*" which means a "little lizard." He used to dress in such close-fitting and stiff costumes that he had not much more freedom of motion than the stiff little lizard. Now he is the dandy who is generally seen standing on a public corner, wearing a French cutaway suit, American patent leather shoes and an English stovepipe hat, with his fingers closed over the indispensable cigarette.

In the evening the populace attend the theatre or some social function. Sunday is the day of all others for recreation, and, with the average inhabitant of Mexico, is one continuous and eternal round of pleasure. After morning service the entire day is devoted to pleasure. Band concerts are always given by the military

bands on the Plaza in the morning, in the Alameda early in the afternoon, and at Chapultepec about five o'clock. Then there is the bull-fight which occurs only on Sundays and holidays.

The average crowd in the City of Mexico is a good natured and peaceable one. The city Indian and his country cousin, the peon from the plantation, join the crowd on a feast day with their numerous progeny. They are not the pleasantest neighbours in the world for both have the odour of garlic and *pulque* and their baths are of the annual variety. That the little brown man is a peon is no fault of his. His uncleanliness is, in a measure, the result of centuries of neglect, and more particularly of a scarcity of water at his home. It is possible that if he had the water his condition would be just the same. Though he is poor and down-trodden, there is nothing of the anarchist about him. He is absolutely devoid of envy or malice; and withal his spirits are gay and he is as generous to his family or friends as his finances permit. The artificial refinements of modern civilization have not yet spoiled him, and there is a pleasant, even if malodorous, naturalness about him.

In no city do ancient and modern customs

come into such intimate contrast as in the City of Mexico. Nowhere is a greater mixture of races to be seen than here. There are many tribes of Indians speaking scores of dialects, and there are *mestizos* of various degrees of mixture with African, American and European blood. Types of four centuries can be seen in any group on one of the plazas. The Plaza Mayor is a great, imposing, central square of fourteen acres in the centre of the city, and on its walks all the types can be seen at their best. Men and women come into the city through the streets lighted by electricity, bearing immense loads on their heads and backs rather than use a wagon. Peddlers carry around jars of water for sale just as in the olden times. Indians, who are almost pure Aztecs, pass along, taking the middle of the street in Indian file. Well dressed men in black broadcloth suits and wearing silk hats go by. The women of the middle class add colour to the scene with the red and blue *rebosas*, sometimes covering the head, or tied across the chest and holding an infant at the back. Nearly all the passers-by show in their colour that they can claim kinship with the hosts of Montezuma. The general effect is kaleidoscopic but entertaining. The great cathedral on the north side

of the Plaza is the one place where all are brought together and class distinction obliterated. Visit the cathedral any day and you may see an Indian with his pack on his back side by side with a young woman who may inherit a dozen titles. There are no select, high-priced, aristocratic pews for rent, but all meet by a common genuflection before the sacred altars. The poor Indian may not understand all the pomp and ceremony, the music of the vested choirs, or the solemn chanting by the priests, but it fills a deep want in his nature and he is satisfied.

At one side of the Plaza Mayor once stood the great Aztec *Teocalli,* the Temple of Sacrifice. This was a high imposing altar reached by a flight of more than a hundred steps. From the top was a magnificent view of the entire valley, and it was from this point that the envious eyes of Cortez looked out upon this beautiful scene. The altar was dedicated to the Aztec war god Huitzilopochtli, and here, to appease the wrath of this terrible god, human sacrifices were offered. The breast was cut open and the heart, still palpitating, plucked out and placed upon the altar. The bodies were cast down to the ground, whence they were taken and prepared for the banquet table.

THE CATHEDRAL

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A part of the space once covered by this gruesome but majestic pile, is now occupied by the Monte de Piedad, or "mountain of mercy," one of the most unique charities in the world. It is nothing more or less than a gigantic pawn-shop, but it is one of the most beneficient institutions in the country. The Count of Regla, a noted personage in Mexico, founded this institution by a gift of three hundred thousand dollars. He did this in order that the poor and needy, and the impoverished members of families once genteel, might secure small sums upon personal property at low rates of interest, instead of becoming involved in the meshes of the blood-sucking vampires who prey upon this class of unfortunates. About three-fourths of the actual value of the property pledged as fixed by appraisers, will be loaned. If the interest is not paid, the property is kept for seven months, when it is offered for sale at a fixed price. If not disposed of in another five months it is sold at auction.

The truly remarkable feature of this establishment is, that if a greater sum is realized than the amount of the loan and interest, the excess is placed to the credit of the owner, or his heirs, and will be kept for one hundred years, after which time it reverts to the insti-

tution. Many old heirlooms of former grandees, Aztec curios, diamonds, gold ornaments and even family gods have passed though this organization of charity. For more than a century it has existed, having survived all the civil wars, revolutions and changes of government. The original capital has been more than doubled by the forfeitures, and many branches of this parent institution are operated in the capital and in several of the large cities of the republic. It is an example that might be suggested to some of our multi-millionaires who do not know what to do with their vast accumulations of wealth.

Even the funerals are conducted in a strange way. With the exception of funerals among the wealthy, the street cars are universally used. The enterprising owner of the street car system some years ago acting on the trust idea, bought up all the hearses and introduced funeral cars. After a short time the people became accustomed to the new plan, which seemed to give satisfaction. Now, trolley funeral cars of the first, second and third class are furnished at a price varying from five dollars for the cheapest class, to a hundred dollars or more for a first-class car. Some of the poor rent coffins which are returned after the burial.

The very poor may be seen carrying their dead on their shoulders to the *Campo Santo,* or holy ground. Graves are usually sold only for a certain number of years, after which, unless the relatives pay the prescribed fee, the bones are taken up and the ground made ready for a new occupant. The dead are soon forgotten. A pile of bones in a corner of the cemetery represents all that is mortal of the generations who passed away not many years ago. There is an entire lack of reverence for the mortal remains of the departed, such as one is accustomed to find in our own country. One is reminded of the couplet

> "Rattle his bones over the stones,
> He's only a pauper, whom nobody owns."

The City of Mexico is not the healthiest city in the world. On the contrary the death rate is unusually high. The average duration of life is said to be only twenty-six years. This is due in a great measure to infant mortality. Typhoid and malarial fevers are prevalent because of the accumulated drainage of centuries, which lies just a few feet beneath the surface. Pneumonia is common and regarded as very dangerous because of the rarefied air, and patients suffering from this disease are immedi-

ately transported to lower altitudes for treatment. The entire lack of hygiene and sanitary conditions among the peon classes is in a great measure responsible for the unusual percentage of mortality. Few other cities in the world have such a high rate of deaths compared with the population.

Strange it is that the capital was ever built on this low, marshy soil when higher land was available and near at hand. It was one of the great blunders of Cortez, for Mexico might have been made a healthy city. No exigency of commerce dictated its selection, for it is far from the sea coast on either side and was difficult of access before the day of railroads. The new city was built on the site of the old, and the temples of the Christian religion were raised on the sites of the old pagan altars wherever possible. A plan of moving the city to higher ground was strongly agitated at one time but the vested interests succeeded in killing this project. It is hoped and believed that when the plans for sewerage are completed, the health conditions will be placed on a par with that of most cities. The authorities are making an honest and earnest effort to carry out these commendable projects.

"Know ye not pulque,
Liquor divine,
The Angels in heaven
Prefer it to wine."

Thus sings the lower class Mexican to whom this liquor has become a curse. To it is due much of his poverty and many of his crimes. For it he will neglect his family and steal from his employer. It does not contain a large percentage of alcohol, but, taken in large quantities, as is customary among these people, it puts them in a dopy condition which they sleep off. One railroad brings in a train-load each day, and, besides, large quantities are brought in by other lines. There are sixteen hundred pulque saloons in the capital, but they are all closed at six o'clock by a law which is strictly enforced. The pulque-shop betrays itself by its odour, as well as by the crowds of poorly dressed and even filthy men and women who surround its doors and press around the counter. It is a gaily decorated affair and is oftentimes adorned in flaring colours inside and out, with reds, blues, greens and yellows predominating, and frequently with a huge, rude painting on the outside walls. In some of the shops you will find a curious string knotted in a peculiar manner or strung with shells. This is a sur-

vival of the Aztec method of counting by means of beads, or shells, strung together.

As one writer says, "the pulque shop, notwithstanding its evil influence upon the life of the people, presents a very picturesque appearance to the tourist who has never seen anything like it before. The dress of the people, the curious, vivid colours of the walls of the building, the semi-barbaric appearance of the decorations within, the curious semi-symbolic pictures upon the walls, the unaccustomed groupings of the people, all combine to attract the attention of the stranger in Mexico."

In the naming of the pulque-dens the imagination is allowed full play. I quote from a Mexican periodical the names of some of these resorts: A place in the suburbs of Mexico is termed the "Delight of Bacchus." One is called "The Seventh Heaven," another "The Food of the Gods," while still another bears the euphonious title of "The Land of the Lotus." "A Night of Delight" is another place near "The Heart's Desire." The above names are commonplace by the side of the following: "The Hang-out of John the Baptist," "The Retreat of the Holy Ghost," "The Delight of the Apostle," "The Retreat of the Holy Virgin," "The Mecca of Delight," and "The

A PICTURESQUE PULQUE SHOP

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Fountain of the Angels." Nothing disrespectful is intended by these appellations but they sound very sacrilegious to us.

There is, however, a brighter side to the Indian life in the City of Mexico. In one corner of the Zocalo, and covering a part of the site formerly occupied by the great sacificial altar, is the flower-market. This flower-market is always attractive and a never-ending source of interest to the tourist. Immense bouquets of the choicest flowers are sold so cheap that the price seems almost absurd. By judicious bargaining a few cents will purchase a large and varied supply of roses, violets and heliotrope, which only dollars could buy from a New York florist. No hot-houses are needed here at any season, for in this climate flowers bloom all the year round, and one crop succeeds another in a never-ending succession. The Mexican Indian is a lover of flowers. It is one of the redeeming traits of his character. He is not always particular as to his personal appearance; he may be unkempt and untidy to look upon; but he loves flowers, is prodigal in his use of them and shows good taste in their arrangement. This taste is innate, is no doubt inherited from his Aztec ancestors, and has survived the oppressions and exactions of the

succeeding centuries. This love for flowers finds expression even in his worship, and it is no uncommon thing to find flowers before the image of the Virgin, and such an offering is one of the expressions of his good will. When we consider that our forefathers were taught to worship God with the first fruits of their husbandry, it is not surprising that this primitive and ignorant race should still find use in their worship for these beautiful products of a prodigal nature.

The gardens and parks of the City of Mexico attain a luxuriant growth that cannot be equalled in our northern cities. These breathing-places where one can sit amid scenes of tropical verdure, and admire the bright tints of the flowers while shielded from the hot sun by the broad-leafed foliage of the plants, are truly delightful spots for an American to visit. They contrast so strongly with the cheerless appearance of the streets. In the centre of the large Plaza Mayor lies the Zocalo, a little green oasis in the great paved waste. It is in the very heart of the city's throbbing life, and everything either has its beginning or ending on this imposing square.

On one side of the Plaza lies the Palacio Nacional which has stood there for more than

two centuries. It covers the site of the ancient palace of Montezuma, and has an imposing facade of nearly seven hundred feet. Over the main entrance hangs the Liberty Bell of Mexico which was rung by Hidalgo on the first call to independence at Dolores, where it had so often summoned the people to mass. The immense windows which look out upon the Plaza open into the various rooms where the official business of the executive department of the republic is transacted. Other parts of this immense structure, for it is almost a square building enclosing an open court, are occupied by the legislative chambers and barrack rooms for several regiments of soldiers.

A few blocks away from the Plaza lies the Alameda, which is the park of the better classes. Every city has an alameda, as the visitor soon learns, but this is *the* alameda of Mexico. It is a pretty place, and, with its beautiful trees, flowers and fountains, forms a resort for the fashionable people, who congregate here on Sundays and feast days to listen to the military bands. The visitor can almost lose himself in this part, for the view is circumscribed on every hand by the dense shrubbery.

It is on the subject of the Paseo de la Reforma that the Mexican becomes enthusiastic.

This beautiful boulevard extends for a distance of two miles from a place near the Alameda to Chapultepec. It is a smooth thoroughfare averaging five hundred feet in width, with promenades on each side shaded by trees under which are stone seats, and with paved driveways in the centre. Here and there the Paseo widens into circles, called *glorietas,* in the centre of which are placed statues. Those already erected include statues to Charles IV of Spain, Columbus and Cuautemoc, the Aztec warrior and emperor. To Maximilian is due the credit for the Paseo, and a more beautiful boulevard cannot be found in Europe or America.

I have purposely described the old features of the city and the unique characteristics before touching upon the more modern innovations. The average visitor would follow that plan, for he would be more interested in the unusual than in that with which he is more or less familiar. Like all capitals and large cities affected by commercialism, the City of Mexico is fast becoming cosmopolitan. The traveller who visited it ten, or even five, years ago would be astonished at the changes wrought by improvements. The fine system of electric lights, the excellent electric traction lines with mod-

ern, commodious cars, the asphalted streets and the attractive new suburbs of an entirely foreign architecture, link the old with the new, the sixteenth with the twentieth century. A city hindered by a racial conservatism, and obstructed at every turn by tradition, does not become entirely modern in a decade, but the trend is there and its progress has been really remarkable. It will never be a city of sky-scrapers for a hard stratum is not encountered until a depth of a hundred and forty feet is reached.

A new and modern hotel is more needed than anything else. There are plenty of hotels of the Mexican kind, where it is almost impossible to find a room with an outside window. All the rooms simply have an opening on the *patio* which answers for both door and window. In cool weather which is sometimes experienced here, there is no means of heating these rooms except by an open pan of coals, which is not very satisfactory to one accustomed to modern steam-heated hotels or a good stove.

The national government controls the federal district within which is situated the City of Mexico, much the same as the Dictrict of Columbia, in our own land, and is assisted by a city council. Plans have been drawn for fifty

million dollars' worth of public buildings, many of which are already under way. The fine new post-office which has been building for several years is now occupied by that department. It is a beautiful structure of the medieval Spanish style, and is a striking departure from the other public buildings. It is four stories high, equipped with every convenience and is finished within and without in elaborate style.

A new legislative palace is under construction, which is the most pretentious building yet planned. Its estimated cost is $20,000,000. Opposite the post-office a national theatre is being erected to cater to the amusement lovers, which is designed to be the finest theatre in the new world. An entire block is being razed to make room for the Panteon Nacional — a resting place for Mexico's illustrious dead. Within the marble walls of this unique memorial will rest all that is mortal of her heroes. An army and navy building, a museum of art and a department of public works are among the other improvements planned for the capital. These buildings are being scattered over the city instead of following the group plan as designed at Washington. The reason for this has been a desire to have every section of the city benefited and beautified by these public struc-

tures. It is hoped to have all of these modern palaces and memorials completed by 1910, when the first centennial of the declaration of Mexican independence will be celebrated.

CHAPTER IV.

THE VALLEY OF ANAHUAC

THE dim traditionary history of Mexico shows us shadowy tribes flitting across the stage, each acting its part like the different performers in a vaudeville show, and then making way for other actors. The Valley of Mexico, or Anahuac, meaning "near the water," seems to have been the centre of the civilization of these early tribes. It is a beautiful valley nearly sixty miles in length and thirty in breadth, and is enclosed by a wall of mountains which circumscribe the view in every direction. Six shallow lakes lie in this hollow: Texcoco, Xochimilco, San Cristobal, Xaltocan, Zumpango and Chalco, of which the first named is the nearest to the city and lies distant about three miles. It is easy to believe that the waters of these lakes at one time entirely surrounded the ancient city of Tenochtitlan, for within historic times their shores have greatly receded.

The history of these early races rests mostly upon tradition; yet a diversity of architectural ruins, and the few meagre records that remain, present certain general facts. These positive proofs leave no doubt that this valley was inhabited from a very early period by tribes or nations which made distinct advances in civilization. These tribes had developed certain of the useful arts and had evolved a social system that exhibited some refinement. The first of these races of whom we have reliable record are the Toltecs, who appeared in the Valley of Mexico in the seventh century at almost the same time that Mohammed was spreading his religion over Asia and Africa. Their sway lasted about five centuries, when they disappeared as silently and mysteriously as they came.

These peaceful and agricultural people were succeeded by the Chichimecs, a more barbarous race, who came from the north. They in turn were followed by the Nahuals. Lastly came the Aztecs, who entered the valley about 1196, and reached a higher state of civilization than any of their predecessors. War was their choicest profession, for they considered that warriors slain in battle were immediately transported to scenes of ineffable bliss. They offered human

sacrifices to their gods. Prescott tells us of a procession of captives two miles long, and numbering seventy thousand persons who were sacrificed at one time. This is incredible, for at that rate the population would soon have been exhausted even in this prolific land. Furthermore we know that the Aztecs were not always successful in war, and may have furnished victims from their own numbers, for sacrifice to the gods of the other nations in the same land.

The Aztecs were clever workers in gold and silver, and were acquainted with a number of arts that are lost to-day. Their picture writings bear witness to a clever fancy and fertile invention of symbols. The numerous idols show their skill in carving and a true artistic instinct. Many antiquites have been exhumed from the swampy soil on which the capital city is built, in making excavations for improvements. The National Museum is a treasure house of these relics and it would take a volume to describe them. The huge Sacrificial Stone, which is generally supposed to have been placed on the top of the great altar, is preserved there. It also houses the horrible image of the god Huitzilopochtli, and a varied assortment of inferior gods, goddesses, and other objects of

THE CALENDAR STONE

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worship. But the most celebrated antiquity — the one showing the greatest advancement — is the Calendar Stone. This stone was buried for centuries, and when resurrected was placed in the west tower of the cathedral. From this place it was removed a few years ago and placed in the museum. It is a mighty stone, eleven feet and eight inches in diameter, and weighs more than twenty tons. The Aztecs divided the year into eighteen months of twenty days each, and then arbitrarily added five days to complete the year.

"Let us follow the cross, and if we have faith we will conquer," was the motto on the banner of Cortez. It was with this spirit that he led his little band over the mountains and into the heart of the empire of Montezuma, late in the fall of 1519. He was met by that sovereign, tradition says, on the site of the present Hospital of Jesus, with every manifestation of friendliness. For several months they were the honoured guests of the Aztec chief, but at length the aggressions of the Spaniards changed friendship to hate and the Aztecs, rising in their wrath, chased the invaders from the city. Driven before the infuriated natives like sheep, they fled over the present road to the suburban village of Tacuba, and many were

those who fell. This rout of the Spaniards has been painted with wonderful vividness by Gen. Lew Wallace in "The Fair God."

It was an awful night of despair, that first day of July, 1520, and the Spaniards who escaped named it La Noche Triste, "the sorrowful night." The pursuit stopped at the little town of Popotla. In this village is a great cypress tree whose branches are blasted by the storms of centuries. For a moment the strong will of Cortez gave way and he sat down upon a stone under the spreading branches of this tree and wept. Whether he wept most for his fallen soldiers or disappointment over his ignominious defeat, we are not told by the chroniclers. This tree is now noted as *el arbol de la noche triste,* or "the tree of the sorrowful night." A high iron fence protects the ancient relic from the souvenir vandals.

The Spaniards retreated beyond the valley to their allies, the Tlaxcalans, at Cholula. Reinforcements and supplies arriving, they returned a few months later and began the memorable siege of Tenochtitlan, and made a triumphal entry into that city on the 13th of August, 1521. Then Guatemotzin, the last of the Aztec emperors, wept in his turn, because the sacred fires of the temple had for ever gone

out, and his people would henceforth be slaves. "Take that dagger," he said, "and free this spirit." But, no, torture must come before death, for Cortez fain would learn where the gold was hidden that had so suddenly disappeared. Today, in the City of Mexico, a statue stands in one of the circles of the famous Paseo, which commemorates this great warrior and his torture by the Spanish chieftain. This monument is greatly cherished by the Indians, who hold annual festivals in his honour and decorate it with a profusion of flowers and wreaths.

The great Valley of Mexico is without a natural outlet, and this fact has caused seven inundations of the capital during exceptionally rainy seasons. One of the lakes, Zumpango, is twenty-five feet higher than the city and drains into Texcoco, from which the waters spread over the city. When the first serious inundations came in 1553, 1580 and 1604, the project of removing the city to a higher level was strongly agitated. It was only the loss of millions of dollars of property that prevented this action. Then the idea of draining this valley was definitely adopted and the work was begun in 1607. A tunnel was decided upon and fifteen thousand Indians were set at work

sinking shafts and driving the tunnel in both directions. Within a year a tunnel four miles long had been completed. This tunnel eventually caved in, so that very little good was realized from it and efforts were made to convert it into an open cut. But this undertaking was not finished until two centuries later. It is a great trench, however, with an average depth of from one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet, and from three hundred to seven hundred feet in width at the top. It is called the *Tajo de Nochistongo,* or Nochistongo cut, and its only use now is as an entrance for the Mexican Central railway. Even this waterway did not drain the valley, remarkable engineering feat as it was, but a new canal was constructed by American engineers a few years ago which successfully accomplishes the work of draining these shallow lakes and carrying off the sewerage of the city.

The first Aztecs who settled in this valley lived almost entirely in the marshes and lakes, we are told, because of the hostility of their fierce neighbours. They were thus obliged to depend almost wholly upon the products of these watered lands for their sustenance, and they acquired some strange and — we would say — depraved tastes. A reminder of those

days is seen in the cakes made of the eggs of a curious marsh-fly, which are sold in the market of the City of Mexico today. The flies themselves are pounded into a paste and sold after being boiled, but the eggs are preferred. The Indians collect the eggs in a systematic manner. Bundles of a certain kind of sedge are planted in Lake Texcoco and the insects deposit their eggs thereon in great quantities. These bundles as soon as covered are shaken over pieces of cloth and replaced for another supply. The eggs thus collected are made into a paste and form a favourite article of food, especially during Lent.

It is interesting to learn what different races regard as toothsome dainties. In Southern Mexico I have seen bushels of common grasshoppers sold in the markets as a delicacy, reminding one of the locusts and wild honey used as food in Biblical times. In other parts of Mexico the honey-ant is greatly sought after for food. The natives of Central America are partial to the iguana, a large lizard sometimes reaching a length of three or four feet, and prefer it to beef. After all there is no accounting for tastes. A man who eats snails might criticize another who relishes oysters. And perhaps the man who want his cheese "ripe"

should not criticize the poor Indian who has inherited a taste for the eggs of the fly.

There are many places of interest round about the City of Mexico which are easily reached. One should not fail to visit the famous *jardines flotandos* or "floating gardens" where the beautiful flowers sold in the market are grown. These gardens, called by the Aztecs *chinampas,* are reached by the Viga Canal. The inquirer is told to take a gondola and float down to them. The name gondola excites pleasant anticipations of a delightful trip. Entering a mule-car at the Plaza Mayor the canal is soon reached after traversing a number of narrow streets which would not especially delight the fastidious traveller. The gondoliers take the stranger almost by force and urge him into one of the flea-infested boats that abound at the landing, and which more resemble a collection of mud-scows than any other kind of floating fleet. Instead of using oars these queer gondoliers with the picture hats pole the boat through the muddy waters of La Viga, stirring up odours which cause the passenger to wish that he was not gifted with the sense of smell, or that he could temporarily dispense with breathing. However, there is life in the stream and on the banks that is typically Mexican, for

SCENES ON THE VIGA CANAL

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boats are constantly passing up and down. Occasionally a load of Indians will float by playing native airs on guitars and other string instruments, with the light-heartedness and gaiety peculiar to this race. On the bank are scattered many native thatch huts around which idle natives group. Along the road pass men and women going to and from the city with loads on their heads or on their backs. The "floating gardens" are always just beyond. They are first at Santa Anita but, when this place is reached, they are at Mexicalcingo. Arrived there the visitor is sent to Ixtacalco, and then he is forwarded to Xochimulco, and so the real floating gardens are never reached. The fact is that they do not float and perhaps never did. This characteristic only exists in the imagination, for it sounds romantic to speak of gardens that can be moved around and anchored at will.

Disembarking at an unattractive mud and thatch village bearing the charming name of Santa Anita, self constituted guides are waiting to conduct you to the object of your visit, something which does not literally exist. Yet the "floating gardens" are all about you at this place. They are simply marsh lands with canals leading in and out and crossways by means

of which the gardener can reach all parts in his boat. The earth may yield somewhat if you step upon it, but they do not float. It is possible, and historians so assert, that floating gardens did exist in reality during the Aztec invasion. These people were frequently driven to dire extremities to secure food. They may have adopted the plan of making floating gardens which could be moved about as necessity compelled. This was done by culling masses of vegetation with its thick entwined stems and pouring upon this mat the rich mud dredged from the bottom of the lake. Then, as the masses settled, more mud was put on until the whole anchored upon the bottom of the lake and became immovable. The gardens look beautiful, covered as they are with the many-coloured blossoms. By means of the canals the roots are kept thoroughly moist at all times, and the plants thrive luxuriantly.

This canal of La Viga was formerly a great trade route, for a large part of the natives came to the City of Mexico by this way. It leads back into regions where dwell full blooded Aztecs who speak a language that is said to be almost the pure ancient tongue. These natives can be distinguished from all others on the street and in the market by their features and

peculiar dress. They are clannish and keep by themselves, except in the intercourse made necessary by barter and trade. They are proud of their lineage and rejoice in the fact that they have not mingled with the other native races.

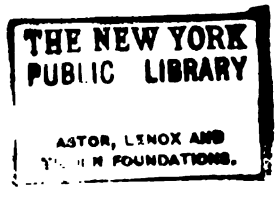
Tacuba, distant only a few miles, is an interesting little village, and has many gardens and a fine old church. It is a good place to study the people and get snap-shots of quaint life. Its principal distinction is that it was a proud city when Tetlepanquetzaltzin was king once upon a time. Texcoco at the time of the conquest was the capital of the Tezcucans, who were a race in alliance with the Aztecs, but it is now principally in ruins, for its glory has passed away. El Desierto was once the home of the Carmelite monks and is frequently visited now in its decay. Coyoacan was the first capital of Mexico, for Cortez established the seat of government there for a time while the new city was being built.

Tacubaya is the home of the wealthy as well as the sporting element. It has beautiful gardens within the adobe walls surrounding the homes of the opulent. It is on higher ground and should have been the site of the capital city itself. It is also called the Monte Carlo of Mexico, for gamblers of all sorts and conditions

congregate here in booths or under umbrellas, and you can lose any sum at games of chance as at that famous resort along the shores of the blue Mediterranean. Games, music, dancing, cock-fights, and bull-fights are a few of the attractions to amuse and entertain the visitor, and relieve him from the burden of carrying around the weighty silver pesos.

In all this beautiful and historic Valley of Mexico there is no more beautiful spot, or none around which so many memories cling, as Chapultepec, the Hill of the Grasshoppers. Historic and beautiful Chapultepec! A great grove of noble cypresses draped with masses of Spanish moss surrounds this rock, and between the trees and along the shores of a pretty little lake wind enchanting walks. One grand old cypress called Montezuma's tree rises to a height of one hundred and seventy feet. It is a magnificent breathing spot — with which no park that I have ever seen in America compares. Legend says that on the top of this rock was situated the palace of Montezuma, and it is probably only legend. No doubt that emperor often rested himself under the friendly shade of the great *ahuehuete,* and reflected on the glory of his empire before the disturbing foreigners came. The present Castle of Chapultepec dates

CASTLE OF CHAPULTEPEC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from 1783 when it was begun by one of the viceroys. Later viceroys, presidents and an emperor added to the original building until now it is a palace indeed but not a beautiful structure. Ill-fated Maximilian made this his home and added greatly to the beauty of the grounds. It is now the White House of Mexico although occupied only a part of the year by the president.

Perhaps nowhere in the world does there exist a more beautiful scene than that which unfolds to the view from this rock. All around is the great sweep of plain with its wealth of cultivated fields; the distant mountain range with its ever varying outline; the snow-capped twin peaks, Popocatapetl (seventeen thousand, seven hundred and eighty-two feet) and Ixtaccihuatl (sixteen thousand and sixty feet), standing like silent sentinels and dominating the horizon; the silver line of the lakes; and beneath us the fair City of Mexico, the ancient Tenochtitlan. Legend says that Popocatepetl, "the smoking mountain," and Ixtaccihuatl, "the woman in white," were once living giants but that having displeased the Almighty they were changed to mountains. The woman died and the contour of her body covered with snow can be traced on the summit of the smaller

peak. The man was doomed to live for ever and gaze on the sleeping form of his beloved. At times when his grief becomes uncontrollable he shakes with his great sobs and pours forth tears of fire.

As I stood on that historic rock I thought of the New World Venice described by Prescott, "with its shining cities and flowering islets rocking, as it were, at anchor on the fair bosom of the waters." Rising above all was the great sacrificial altar upon which the sacred fires were ever kept burning. Beneath this rock under the friendly branches of the giant cypress Montezuma has no doubt sheltered himself from the hot sun. Cortez here rested himself after his severe marches. French zouaves in their quaint uniforms have bivouacked in the grove. American bluecoats stacked their arms here after the victory of Molino-del-Ray. And Mexicans now take their siestas under the same friendly shade while other races are robbing them of their wealth.

Yes, historic scenes and tragedies have taken place on this plain. Nations have come and gone. Victors have themselves been led away captives, and taskmasters have in turn become slaves. How finite is man or his works in the

presence of this great panorama of nature! Races have come and gone but the mountains endure. Human tragedies have been enacted here but the sky is just as blue and the sun just as bright, as when Cortez looked with envious eyes upon this beautiful valley. The mimic play of men, and women and races upon this amphitheatre has scarcely left its imprint. The only occasions when the calm serenity of nature has been disturbed were when the giant Popocatapetl, overcome with grief at the loss of his beloved, has shaken this whole valley with his sobs and poured forth plenteous tears of fire over its fair surface.

CHAPTER V

THE TROPICS

In no country in the world is it possible to move from one extreme of climate to the other in so short a time as in Mexico. Within less than twenty-four hours one can travel from the sun-baked sands of the Gulf coast to the snow-covered, conical peak of one of the great extinct volcanoes, thus traversing every zone of vegetable life from the dense tropical growth of the former to the stunted pines of the latter. By railway it is a journey of only a few hours from the plateaus, at an altitude of eight thousand feet, to the sea level, and a most interesting ride it is. The Mexican Railway, which is the oldest railway in the republic, runs from the capital to Vera Cruz and is the best route, for its wonderful engineering feats and beautiful scenery have drawn tourists from all parts of the world. Leaving the capital, the road skirts the bank of Lake Texcoco, through a pass in the mountains sur-

rounding the Valley of Mexico, and across the Plains of Apam, the home of the maguey, for a hundred and fifty miles before the exciting part of the trip is reached.

The descent begins at Esperanza, which lies at the very foot of Mt. Orizaba. Esperanza means "hope" and it is well named for the traveller can "hope" for better things as the train approaches the coast. Noah's Ark rests near here, for I saw it with my own eyes labelled in plain letters, *Arc de Noe,* but it is now — sad to tell — devoted to the sale of pulque. Esperanza is eight thousand and forty-four feet above the sea and one hundred and twelve miles from Vera Cruz as the track runs, but much nearer as the crow would fly. There is a drop of four thousand, one hundred feet in the next twenty-nine miles and it is one of the grandest rides in the world. In places the road seems like a little shelf on the side of a towering mountain while a yawning chasm awaits the coach below. As soon as Boca del Monte (Mouth of the Mountain) is reached, only a few miles from Esperanza, the downward impetus is felt and all the energy of the curious double-ended English engines is devoted to holding back the heavy train with its human cargo.

Passing through a tunnel here, the scene bursts upon the traveller without any warning or prelude, in all its grandeur and magnificence. The engine accommodatingly stops for water so that the passengers have an opportunity to view this wonderful panorama. Maltrata nestles in the hollow, a dozen miles away by rail, yet the red tiles of the roofs, a red-domed church and the ever-present plaza gleam in the sunshine two thousand feet directly underneath. The valley is almost flat and is divided into squares by hedges and walls and, reflecting every shade of green, looks like a checker-board arrangement of nature. Beyond the valley, hill succeeds hill until they are lost in the purple haze of the horizon, or are overtopped by snow-capped Orizaba. Indians appear here with beautiful bouquets of roses, tulips and orchids, with their yellow, pink and red centres, for sale. The train passes on over a narrow bridge spanning a deep chasm and down the mountain until Maltrata is reached, where the same Indians will greet you with the same bouquets, for they have climbed down the two thousand feet in less time than it took the train to reach the same level.

Leaving Maltrata the road enters a cañon called *El Infernillo,* the Little Hell, goes

through a tunnel and another beautiful valley, running through fertile fields and by wooded hills, until Orizaba, the border-land of the tropics, is reached.

This city at an altitude of four thousand feet is in the *tierra templada*, the temperate region. This zone is as near paradise in the matter of climate as any location on earth could well be. It retains most of the beauties and few of the annoying insects and tropical fevers of the hot zone. It has the moisture of the lowlands with the cool breezes of the uplands and is well named " temperate zone " because of its fine climate and equable temperature.

Orizaba is a town of thirty-five thousand people and a very beautiful and interesting place with its palm-shaded streets and low Moorish buildings. Its Alameda is a quaint, shady park with an abundance of flowers and blooming trees. Along the street the orange trees thrust their laden branches out into the highway over the low adobe walls. On the banks of the stream the washerwomen beat their clothes to a snowy white upon the smooth round stones. Life moves along in smooth, easy channels with these people. And it is not to be wondered at, for there is

A sense of rest
To the tired breast
In this beauteous Aztec town."

Between Orizaba and Cordoba, a distance of sixteen miles, is perhaps the best cultivated section in Mexico. The products of all the zones are mingled and corn and coffee grow side by side as well as peach trees and the banana. Cordoba is just on the border of the *tierra caliente,* or hot country proper, and is a much smaller city than Orizaba. It is a very old town and was founded as a place of refuge from the malarial fevers of the coast lands. This region is noted for its fine coffee, and there are numberless coffee plantations as well as many sugar *haciendas.* The Mexican of the tropics can be seen here dressed in immaculate white. Leaving Cordoba dense tropical forests of palm and palmetto begin to appear. These alternate with groves of coffee and bananas, gardens of mangoes, fields of pineapples and other tropical fruits. Nature begins to manifest herself in her grandest productions. Birds of brilliant plumage are seen. The towering trees, rocks and entire surface of the soil are covered with bright flowers such as orchids, oleanders and honeysuckles and luxuriant vines. These and the dense jungles

are all reminders that the tropics have been reached at last. Soon the train enters Vera Cruz, the city without cabs, the landing-place of the great conquistador and his cohorts.

The principal port now, as it has always been since the landing of Cortez on the twenty-first day of April, 1519, is Vera Cruz, or, as he named it, *La Villa Rica de Vera Cruz* — the Rich City of the True Cross. Most Americans who pass through here leave by the very first train or boat for fear of pestilence. I met one fellow-countryman there who was almost beside himself because the boat he had expected to take was delayed a couple of days. This city is reputed to be the favourite loafing-place of the *stegomyia fasciata* whose bite results in the *vomito*, or yellow fever. If all the sensational reports sent out concerning this city were true then "Pandora's box was not a circumstance to the evils which Vera Cruz contains." I had read in Mr. Ober's excellent work on Mexico of an American consul who died here just thirteen days after reaching the port that his ambition had led him to; and of the terrible ravages of the scourge when deaths were averaging forty per day. I arrived there after night had set in. Eating a light supper and seeing that my name was duly posted on

the big blackboard bulletin according to the custom prevailing there, I retired to my room, and only breathed freely after securely drawing the mosquito netting around my bed so that it would be impossible for a *stegomyia* to get through.

It was almost a surprise on the following morning to find able-bodied Americans and husky Englishmen pursuing their avocations in an unconcerned way as though such things as yellow fever or smallpox were not to be thought of. Then, again, I was alarmed at the numerous red flags hanging out, which I took to be quarantine flags, for everything is different here. Upon investigation this alarm was dispelled, for those places proved to be pulque-shops and the flag meant that a fresh supply of the "liquor divine" had just been received. It is probably true that Vera Cruz was a hot-bed for the *vomito* a few years ago, but Mexican statistics report only twelve deaths in 1904 and one hundred and twenty-two in 1905 from this disease, which is not bad for a city of thirty thousand people, where a large proportion of the population cannot be made to obey the ordinary laws of sanitation. I doubt whether the death rate is much greater than in our own cities on the Gulf coast. This

change is due to the better situation that has been brought about by the authorities.

An adequate supply of pure water was the first important step in this move for improved conditions. This was secured by utilizing the water of the Jamapa River at a point about twelve miles distant and passing this water through several filtering beds before turning it into the mains which supply the city. A sewerage system has been constructed, by means of which the sewerage is carried out and discharged into deep water so that the harbour will not be contaminated. Disinfecting stations have been established and a plant for the disposition of garbage. Then in addition to the regular force of health officers, there is a large volunteer street cleaning brigade. These volunteer forces are not on the pay-roll and yet they do their work in a thorough manner even if their methods cannot be approved. Their only reward is the enforcement of a fine of five dollars for the protection of their lives. By the natives these street cleaners are called *zopilotes* but to an American they are plain, everyday buzzards. Hundreds of these birds can be seen perched on the roof-tops or waddling through the streets.

For centuries the port of Vera Cruz was the

bane of vessel owners for there was no protection from the severe " Northers " so prevalent on the Gulf and it was one of the most inconvenient and dangerous harbours on that coast. It was for this reason that Cortez destroyed the vessels which had brought his forces over from Cuba. An excellent harbour has been constructed at great cost and ocean-going vessels can now anchor alongside of the main pier and unload. A large new union station will at once be erected by the four railways entering this city on a site adjoining the pier, which will further increase the facilities of this port.

The fortress of San Juan de Ulua, now a prison, and which is reached by a short sail through the shark-infested harbour, is an interesting structure and has seen many vicissitudes. Used as a fort for several centuries by the Spaniards, it has successively been occupied by the French, Americans, and again by the French and their allies in the war of the intervention. The buildings in Vera Cruz are nearly all low, one-storied structures of adobe, and the walls are tinted in red, yellow, blue and green, thus furnishing to the eye a pleasing variety and, with the bay, reminding one of Cadiz in old Spain. There is an attractive plaza and an imposing avenue of the cocoanut

BRIDGE AT ORIZABA

THE BUZZARDS OF VERA CRUZ

AVENUE OF PALMS, VERA CRUZ

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palm. Vera Cruz is the gateway to the capital and many millions of imports and exports pass through here each year, as much as at all the other ports of Mexico combined, leaving out Progresso, on the Yucatan coast, through which the henequen traffic is carried.

Tampico is the second Gulf port in importance and on the completion of a direct route to the capital will be a close rival to Vera Cruz. Coatzacoalcos is the Gulf port of the Tehuantepec railway and will become an important port. The Pacific coast affords better natural harbours. Acapulco is one of the finest natural land-locked harbours in the world. Though now of secondary importance because of the absence of railroad connections, at one time this picturesque harbour sheltered the old Spanish galleons engaged in the East India trade. Their freight was unloaded there and transported overland on the backs of burros and mules to Vera Cruz and re-shipped to Spain. Manzanillo is an important seaport on that coast and will soon be connected by rail with the capital, when its importance will be greatly increased. Other important ports on that coast are Mazatlan, Guayamas, San Blas and Salina Cruz, the Pacific port of the Te-

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huantepec route, where the great harbour is nearly completed.

The *tierra caliente* comprises a fringe of low plains which extend inland from the coast a distance varying from a few miles in width to a hundred or more. From thence it rises by a succession of terraces until the great inland plateaus are reached. The higher the altitude the lower the temperature, and it is estimated that there is a change of 1.8 degree Fahrenheit for each sixty feet of elevation in this region. This zone is characterized by the grandeur and variety of vegetable life, and it is an almost uninterrupted forest except where it has been cleared. A ride through the tropics is a revelation of what nature can do when aided by a never-ending succession of warm sunshine and abundant rain upon rich soil. Trees of great height and size are interspersed among plants which are generally of a tree-like nature, and are conspicuous for the development of their trunks and ramifications. The innumerable species of reeds and creeping plants that entwine themselves in a thousand different ways among the trees and plants make a passage almost impossible. It is for this reason that the natives always go around armed with the *machete,* a long blade very much like

a corn-cutter, for it enables them to cut their way through the dense undergrowth, and is a protection, should any danger be encountered. The palms which are ever associated with the tropics are seen in great profusion and in countless varieties. Millions of ferns and broad-leaved plants which would be welcomed in the gardens and groves of northern homes are wasting their graceful beauty in these jungles and wildernesses. Trees are covered with beautiful orchids and vines coil about the trunks and limbs like great snakes, and then drop down to the earth and take root again in the damp soil.

To those who know them the tropics are not so terrible, treacherous though they may seem. Some enter this zone with a feeling of creepiness as though they were entering a darkened sick-room sheltering some malignant disease. They hesitate to breathe for fear that the very air is poisonous and they may take in the germs of some malady with an unpronounceable name. They shrink from nature as though she had ceased to be the kind mother to which they were accustomed in the colder climates. It is true that there is something horribly creepy and uncanny about this inevitable tropical growth, which is so frail and

fragile outwardly but seems possessed of an unconquerable vitality. And yet in many of the so-called unhealthy places, there is scarcely more danger to health than elsewhere, if one but observes the same rules of right living. Continuous hard labour, such as the northern farmer is accustomed to devote to his little farm, is not possible. Exposure to the intense heat of the sun at midday and the heavy rains will bring on fevers and malaria just as surely as it produces the luxuriant vegetation. For this reason the tropics will probably never be suited for colonization by the small farmer who is fascinated with the possibilities offered by land capable of producing two or three crops in a single year.

In general, Mexico is poorly supplied with rivers. However, along the Atlantic coast they are very numerous and large, although not navigable for any great distance, or for vessels large enough to be of much aid to commerce. The size of the rivers is due to the great amount of rainfall, which varies from seventy to one hundred and eighty inches annually. When this is compared to an annual rainfall of twenty to forty inches in the northern states of the United States, the conditions in the tropics are better understood. This excessive rain-

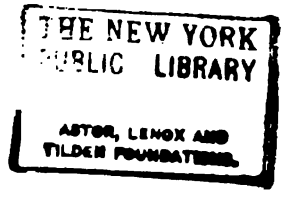
fall washes down earth from the higher ground and this, together with the layers of vegetable mold, have formed soil from eight to fourteen feet in depth thus making it practically inexhaustible. The temperature varies from 70° to 100° Fahrenheit. The Pacific coast has a higher temperature and less rainfall than the Gulf coast. However, there is a stretch of land extending north of Acapulco along the coast and from eight to thirty miles wide that cannot be beat for tropical beauty and productiveness. There are many rivers and streams that traverse this land on the way from the great mountains to the Pacific.

There is a charm about the life in the hotlands that is missing in other parts of Mexico. Of all the inhabitants of that country, the life of the people in the hot country is the most interesting. This is probably due to the fact that these people have aways had more freedom than the Indians on the plateaus who were practically slaves for a couple of centuries. The great estates there required sure help and the natives were reduced to serfs. In the mines they were worked with soldiers set over them as guards. In the hotlands it was easier to make a living, for a bountiful nature supplied nearly all their wants. And yet many employ-

ers of labour say that the peon from the hot country makes the most satisfactory workman. These Indians seem like a superior race. For one thing they are scrupulously clean which, in itself, is a pleasing contrast to the daily sights in Northern Mexico. Water is abundant everywhere; the extreme heat renders bathing a great comfort and their clothes are kept immaculate. They are fond of social life and almost every night groups can be seen gathered together in some kind of entertainment.

Their homes are different from those in the colder lands. The houses of the middle and lower classes are built of bamboo or other light material found in the tropical jungles, and thatched with palm leaves. The upright bamboo poles are often set an inch or more apart thus giving a free circulation of air. An Indian village generally consists of one long, winding, irregular street lined on each side by these picturesque huts, and bearing a strong resemblance to a village in the interior of Africa. Down these streets swarm in equal profusion half-naked babies and children long past the childhood stage dressed in the same simple way, and hungry looking dogs. The hot country is sparsely populated in comparison with the plateaus and there are no large

AN INDIAN HOME IN THE HOT COUNTRY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cities, although archeologists tell us that the earliest civilization seems to have been located there. It could support a population many, many times larger with ease.

The most productive parts of the world are found in the *tierra caliente* which instead of being given up to impenetrable jungles, the homes of reptiles and breeding place of poisonous insects, should be made to produce those luxuries and necessaries which contribute to make civilized life tolerable. All over the world the fruits and other articles of the tropics are coming into greater demand each year. In the year 1906 the United States imported fruits and other food products of tropical countries, not including coffee, to the value of more than $150,000,000, or nearly two dollars for each man, woman and child in the country. Of the purely tropical products, sugar was by far the largest item on the list. Bananas to the amount of $11,500,000 were brought in, and were second on the list with cacao a close rival for this place.

As yet Mexico supplies but a small portion of these articles to the United States. Yet the possibilities of agriculture here are equal to those of any similar lands, and this, together with superior transportation facilities and a

stable government, ought to greatly increase the trade. In addition to the above items, this soil is well adapted to the following fruits and useful products, all of which are native to the soil: oranges, lemons, limes, pineapples, grapefruit, vanilla bean, indigo, rubber, coffee, tobacco and many drug-producing plants. It is difficult for the small farmer to succeed, as he cannot do all his own labour in that climate and cannot get satisfactory help just when it is needed. He could not afford to hire a force of labourers by the year. Successful farming in the tropics can only be done on a large scale with a regular force of labourers maintained on the plantation. The title to the soil can be purchased cheaply but the first cost of the land is probably not more than one-third of the ultimate cost by the time it is cleared, planted, and the necessary improvements made. Furthermore many tropical plants such as coffee, rubber and cacao require several years of care before there is a profitable yield.

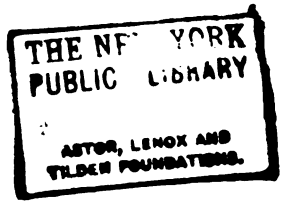
Coffee and banana culture go hand in hand, for the broad leaves of the banana provide the shade so necessary to the young coffee trees. The banana also furnishes a little revenue during the four or five years before the coffee trees have fully matured. The coffee region

is very extensive, for it will grow at a height of from one to five thousand feet, and flourishes best at an altitude of two to three thousand feet. It requires plenty of warmth and moisture. The coffee, which is a tree and not a bush, is set out in rows several feet apart, and will grow twenty feet tall if permitted, but is not allowed to grow half that height. The tree is flowering and developing fruit all the time but the principal harvest is in the late fall. It is not allowed to ripen on the tree, for when the green berries have turned a bright red, they are gathered, dried in the sun, hulled and then marketed. The states of Vera Cruz and Chiapas produce the choicest coffee, but it is cultivated all over the republic where it is possible. Coffee was introduced into this country from Arabia by Spanish priests and was found to be adapted to the soil. The best grades are sent to Europe, for it is a common saying throughout Mexico and Central America that only the poor grades of coffee are sent to the United States. This is rather a slur on the tastes of the American people, but such is our reputation down there.

"Looking at it from my point of view — the lazy man's outlook — I can see nothing so inviting as coffee culture, unless it be a fat

'living' in an English country church," says a writer. For myself, the one thing that appealed to me above all others was the cultivation of the banana. The returns are quick, the income regular and the profits large. I travelled through the banana region of Honduras, where for thirty miles the railroad passed by one plantation after another of the broad-leaved banana plants growing as high as fifteen feet. Great fortunes have been made by the banana-growers of that country and Costa Rica. This fruit flourishes best in the lowlands. The preparation of the ground is very simple, for the young banana plants are set out among the piles of underbrush left after clearing and which soon decay in that climate. After nine months or a year the plants begin to bear, and each stalk will produce one bunch of bananas. The stalk is then cut down and a new one, or several, will spring up from the roots and will bear in the same length of time. Thus a banana plantation that is carefully looked after will produce a marketable crop each week in the year, so that there is a constant revenue coming in to the owner. The cultivation of this delicious fruit, for which there is an ever-increasing market, brings the quickest return of any tropical product.

RICE CULTURE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Sugar cane can be raised profitably as the stalks grow high with many joints and have a greater percentage of saccharine than in most countries where it is cultivated. Furthermore it does not require replanting so frequently. Cacao is another truly tropical product. It is from the cacao bean that chocolate is made. The trees are usually transplanted and bear in about four years and the beans are gathered three or four times a year. They are then removed from the pods and dried in the sun. The trees will bear for many years. Orange culture along modern scientific lines, such as are used in California and Florida, would be profitable, for the crop matures earlier and could be marketed long before the fruit has ripened in those states. The Mexicans are great rice eaters and there is a good field for its culture. The cocoanut palm offers good returns as there is a good market for its fruit. Rubber grows wild and many plantations have been set out in rubber trees. In the past year Mexico has shipped more than two million pounds of crude rubber, and the production is increasing. Vast tracts of mahogany are found down toward Guatemala in the states of Campeche and Tabasco. These great trees are cut down, hewn square and then

hauled by mules to a waterway where they are formed into rafts and floated down to the ports. There is much waste in the present crude way of cutting and marketing this valuable wood. Logwood and other dyewoods are found in the same forests. The world's supply of chicle also comes from the same source.

What the Mexican tropics need is men of energy backed by capital sufficient to utilize large tracts of this rich soil. It is true that many plantations are now being cultivated and it is equally true that many have been abandoned as failures after unsuccessful attempts at cultivation. The fault has not been poor soil but poor management. Promotion and success are not synonymous terms, and much of the promotion has been done by unscrupulous persons whose only purpose was to dispose of stock to the gullible. Richer soil cannot be found anywhere, but it must be cultivated with intelligence and good judgment the same as in any other part of the world, or failure will result.

CHAPTER VI

A GLIMPSE OF THE ORIENTAL IN THE OCCIDENT

Some two hundred miles south of the City of Mexico lies Oaxaca (pronounced Wa-hâ-ka). The Valley of Oaxaca was looked upon by the Spanish conquerors as El Dorado, the traditional land of gold. The Aztecs told them that the gold of Montezuma came from the sands of the rivers in this and the connecting valleys, and that immeasurable treasure was to be found there. Believing these tales, Cortez secured large grants of land from the crown, and, with the consent and approval of his sovereign, assumed to himself the title of Marquis of the Valley of Oaxaca.

The cupidity of the Spaniards led them to employ every subterfuge to induce the natives to reveal the source of their plentiful supply of gold. The Indians, after considerable urging, — so we are told, — offered to conduct one man to this place, if he would submit to be blindfolded for the trip. This was agreed to

and the party set out on their journey. Thinking that he would mark the way, the Spaniard dropped a grain of corn every few steps. After they had travelled a long distance, the Spaniard had the bandage removed from his eyes and he was allowed to look around, when he beheld such wealth as mortal vision never before had seen. His eyes glittered with the greed of his covetous nature, but his countenance soon changed when a dusky warrior stepped up and handed him a vessel which contained every grain of corn that he had dropped by the way. For this reason he was never able to retrace his steps to this wonderful region, and the wily Spaniards were again outwitted by the simple natives.

Oaxaca is reached by the Southern Railway which starts at Puebla. This road penetrates one of the richest sections of the republic, with abundance of timber and minerals, and unlimited beds of onyx and marble. Little of this wealth is seen from the railroad, as this line follows the narrow valleys, through one cañon into another, furnishing scenery as grandly picturesque as the great passes of Colorado. The mountains in places are lifted up thousands of feet with crags and peaks which the storms have cut into fantastic shapes

and whose walls drop almost perpendicularly to the water's edge. Then again the cañon widens, and the panorama extends across the valley where gigantic rocks, stained in all colours by the oozings of the metals of the earth, form far-away pictures not unlike the battlements of an ancient fortress. The sun tinges each a different hue, with deeper tones in the near ones which fade as they approach the horizon, until all seem to blend into the intense blue of the sky.

As the train leaves the City of the Angels, just at daybreak, a wonderful panorama is opened up to view. Look in any direction, and the tiled domes of the churches rise above the plain, for each village and *hacienda* has its own. The forts erected on the surrounding hills which are emblematic of the force that subjugated this valley, are seen, and near them the pyramid of Cholula erected by those who were overcome. Over all tower those mighty monuments of nature, the white-capped peaks of Popocatapetl, Ixtaccihuatl, Orizaba and old Malintzi, with the morning sun reflected on their snowy heads. The road ascends and descends, and then ascends again before it takes a dip down into the *tierra caliente*. A number of native villages are passed but only one town

of any size, Tehuacan, noted for its mineral springs. It is a pretty little city, and in the centre of a rich agricultural district. The road finally enters a wide, open country with rich valleys which extend to the hills beyond. At last, after a twelve hours' journey, our train rolls into this occidental Eden.

More than three centuries ago a Spanish writer described Oaxaca as " not very big, yet a fair and beautiful city to behold, which standeth three-score leagues from Mexico in a pleasant valley." It is located at the junction of three valleys and on the bank of a broad river, which meanders through a billowy sea of cornfields toward the Pacific. Whichever way the eye may turn the view is bounded by hills covered with forests. Viewed from one of these hills the city looks like a broad, flat-covered plain of stone buildings above which are seen many domes, and the whole scene has a truly oriental touch.

The people that the Spanish found in possession of these valleys were an industrious race. They had tilled the soil centuries before the Spaniards, in their lust for gold, despoiled these beautiful valleys. There is not a hollow, or knoll, where it is possible to scrape a little soil with a hoe, that has not at some time been

cultivated. These early races had even constructed irrigation works which kept green their fields during the dry season. The rich basins filled with alluvium are now owned by the rich *hacendados,* or landowners, whose white buildings dot the landscape here and there and, with their trees, orchards and cultivated fields, lend life and colour to an otherwise dull prospect. The poor Indians are forced to work for these landlords who claim title to the land formerly owned by their ancestors, or retire to the hills where, well up toward the crests, they cultivate their little fields of corn and beans. There is one tribe of Indians that dwell in the mountains of Oaxaca who have never acknowledged either Spanish or Mexican sovereignty, and maintain their own tribal form of government. They can be seen at Oaxaca on market days.

We find Oaxaca to be a city of about thirty-three thousand people of whom three-fourths or more are Indians. It is laid out with narrow streets, down the centre of which runs a stream of water, from which rise at times odours not the most agreeable. The houses are low and one-storied, with grated windows after the style of architecture introduced by the Spaniards, and by them adopted from the

Moors, who copied it from the Persians. The water supply is abundant, being brought in from the hills by an aqueduct. Fountains are located at numerous places, and a constant succession of Rebeccàs with heads enveloped in their shawls, and carrying great earthen water-jars pass to and fro from them.

Oaxaca contains many fine churches of which one, Santo Domingo, has been both monastery and fortress, and has just been restored at a cost of $13,000,000 (silver) so it is claimed, making it the most costly church in Mexico, if not in North America. The gold on the walls was so heavy in former times, that the soldiers quartered here during revolutionary uprisings employed themselves in removing it. This city has been the scene of troublous times, and has been captured and re-captured by the combating forces. It has given to the country two great presidents, Juarez and Diaz, of whom it may well be proud. Of these two men, great in the annals of Mexico, the former was a full-blooded Indian, and the latter has a fair percentage of the same blood in his veins. A monument to Juarez has been erected, and some day — may it be far distant — when nature has claimed her own, this city will raise a memorial to her still greater son.

THE AQUEDUCT, OAXACA

A FOUNTAIN IN OAXACA

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Oaxaca has a pleasant plaza, called the Plaza de Armas, adorned with various semi-tropical trees and shrubs, in the centre of which is the ever-present band-stand. The Cathedral and municipal palace face this square. My visit here was during a *fiesta* and this plaza was the favourite resort of the Indians as well as myself. The Indians living in the hills took undisturbed possession at night, and groups of tired *Indios* wrapped themselves in their *sarapes,* or shawls, and stretched their tired limbs out on the cold stones; or propped themselves against the walls of a building to rest. A number of catch-penny devices were running during the evening and the favourite seemed to be the phonograph. The Indian would pay his *centavo,* put the transmitter in his ears and listen without a sign of expression on his stolid face. Nevertheless, he enjoyed it, because he would repeat the operation until his stock of coppers was considerably diminished.

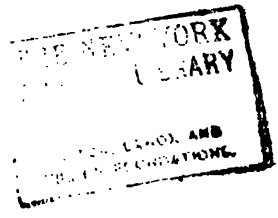
Saturday is market day in this city, and a visit to this popular place is worth a trip to Mexico. The atmosphere of the market is truly oriental, for these people have a genius for trading as the innumerable little stands where crude pottery, rough-made baskets, homemade *dulces,* etc., are sold, fully proves.

The entrance takes one past the dealers in fried meats, where bits of pork and shreds of beef are dished out sizzling hot to the peons under the big *sombreros* by women cooks who crouch over earthenware dishes placed on small braziers containing a charcoal fire, and a three course meal can be obtained for a few cents. There is always a crowd around this department, for these people are ever ready to eat, and their capacity is only limited by their purse.

Next is encountered the fruit and vegetable stands. The finest fruits and vegetables, and especially the latter, that I saw in Mexico, were right here in this market and this was in the month of December. Generally the vegetables in Mexico are not large, but here were fine potatoes, great red tomatoes, gigantic radishes and elephantine cabbages. Oranges, bananas, limes, plantains and pineapples were plentiful, as well as the less-known fruits such as *zapotes* (a kind of melon), *aguacates* (a pale green fruit and vegetable combined), granaditas, mangoes, granadas and pomegranates. The cocoanut of the hotlands is mingled with the *dunas,* the fruit of the prickly pear, of the higher lands. With these a great many drinks called *frescas,* or sherbets, are flavoured, the

THE MARKET-WOMEN OF OAXACA

THE POTTERY-MARKET, OAXACA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merits of which are announced by the dark-eyed, be-shawled vendors. The women merchants, many of them smoking cigarettes, sit around on the floor so thick in places that it is almost impossible to work your way through the mixed assortment of peppers and babies; corn, lean babies and peas; charcoal, beans and fat babies; naked babies, knives and murderous-looking *machetes;* hats, laughing babies, shawls and other useful articles; turkeys, crying babies, chickens, dirty babies, ducks, squawking parrots in cages, pigs and other live stock, including babies of all kinds and descriptions.

The pottery market presided over by the solemn-faced, oriental merchants is a never-ending place of interest, and these artistic vessels are carried over the mountains on the backs of the Indians. Crude baskets and mats made of the palm fibre are found in abundance as well as brooms which bear no union label.

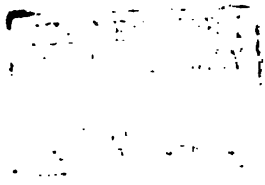
No one could afford to miss the flower department where flowers are so cheap that it seems almost a sin not to buy them. Here are velvety sweet peas, purple pansies, tangled heaps of crimson and white roses, azure forget-me-nots, pyramids of heliotrope and scarlet geraniums. For a few cents one can buy al-

most a bushel of these, or, if preferred, can substitute marguerites, carnations, poppies, or violets. An American will probably have to pay twice as much as a native, even after the shrewdest bargaining.

Outside the market enclosure caravans of over-loaded donkeys jostle each other as a great solid-wheeled cart yoked to a couple of meek-eyed oxen creaks by, or a tram car drawn by galloping mules thunders noisily along to an accompaniment of loud cracks of the whip, and a constant repetition of "*mulas*" and "*arres*" the "rrs" being brought out with a long trill.

The Indian will travel for days on his way to market at Oaxaca. On the day before market I drove out the south road for a number of miles, and the entire distance was literally black, — or perhaps it would be better to say brown, — with the natives coming to town bearing the "brown man's burden," and travelling along in the middle of the road at a rapid pace. These Indians were coming from the "hot country" farther south and were bringing oranges, bananas, cocoanuts and other kinds of tropical fruits, besides chickens, eggs and other poultry. Most of them were on foot, though the more fortunate had don-

CROSSING THE RIVER ON MARKET-DAY



keys to carry the load; but they themselves walked and drove the animal. The women bore large baskets on their heads, which they balanced gracefully, although sometimes the loads are exceedingly heavy. They will carry one hundred pounds or more in this manner. Frequently a baby is swung across the back as an additional burden. The little mites are good natured in this uncomfortable position, and do not make half as much trouble as American babies in their rubber-tired, easy-springed perambulators.

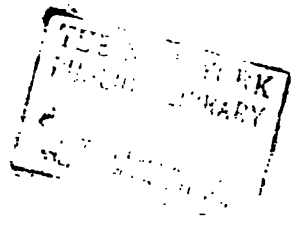
A small pot, a basket of tortillas, a few fagots and plenty of coffee complete the outfit of the man. Perhaps the value of his load is not over a dollar or two in gold, but his entertainment along the way costs little, for he sleeps out of doors, carries his food, makes his own coffee and needs to buy nothing except perhaps a little fruit and *aguardiente* (brandy). The entire family sometimes accompany him, for the wife is afraid to have her man go away alone for fear he may desert her.

On the opposite side of the city from the road just described is another main highway. I stood here for several hours by the river bank on the afternoon of a market-day, when the people were leaving for home. The sight

never grew tiresome or monotonous, as there was a constant succession of pictures, which a moving-picture machine alone could adequately portray. Although there is a bridge across the stream, no one used it, for by making a short cut across the river bed a hundred yards or more was saved. The pedestrian would remove his sandals to wade through the shallow water, and then replace them on reaching the opposite bank. The Indians going this way had more burros, and, as their load was disposed of, the family rode. Frequently a poor, diminutive burro carried as many persons as could sit on his back, in addition to the large baskets. Many of the great carts drawn by one or two yoke of oxen passed this way. The cattle are all yoked by the horns, which seems a cruel way, for their heads are brought down almost to the ground, and it looks as though every jar must cause them suffering.

So this unique panorama continued all the afternoon. I could not think of anything but Palestine, as I gazed at this unceasing procession of donkeys, Egyptian carts, women with their shawls folded and worn on their heads in Eastern fashion; and in the background the white walls, red tiled roofs and domes of the churches of Oaxaca. For a moment I won-

PRIMITIVE PLOUGHING NEAR OAXACA



dered if I were not mistaken, and had suddenly strayed into some corner of the Orient, and found myself involuntarily looking for the mosque, and listening for the cry of the muezzin calling the faithful to prayer.

A trip around about the valley near Oaxaca only served to strengthen the oriental cast of the picture. The types of buildings, and the signs of water and fertility in the midst of widespread aridity (for this was the dry season) are eastern. I saw many flocks of goats herded by the solitary shepherd in the truly old-fashioned way. Then, a slow-moving team of oxen followed by a peon guiding a one-handled, wooden plough deepens the picture. How powerful must have been the Moorish influence in Spain, for this is the plough of Egypt and Chaldea which was carried along the coast of Barbary into Spain, and left there as a heritage to the Spaniards who introduced it into the new world.

Yes, Oaxaca is an El Dorado, a land of treasure to the searcher after the picturesque. The real wealth lies in its delightful climate. The temperature is mild and does not vary more than twenty or thirty degrees during the year. The altitude is a little less than five thousand feet and the air is fresh and bracing. There is

also an abundance of good, pure water. Some day this city will be known as a health resort for people from cold climates. They will find relief from the strenuous life in quiet, restful, oriental Oaxaca.

There is no more picturesque *hacienda* in all Mexico than that of Mitla a few miles away. Because of the bleak and rough nature of the country it has retained its early characteristics. The little store is a revelation of the simple and primitive life of these people. Evening is sure to find Don Felix, or his black-eyed son, behind the counter waiting on the groups of Indians who are constantly coming in to buy a couple of cents worth of *mescal*, or *tequila*, or cigarettes. One Indian woman came in to purchase a *centavo* (one-half cent) of vinegar, another of lard, and others an equal amount of honey, soap, sugar or matches. They would invariably buy only one article at a time, then pay for it and watch the copper disappear down a slot in the counter. Outside the door was an old Indian who had brought a load of wood down from the mountain, and the good housewives were noisily bargaining with him for a centavo's worth of wood, and trying to get an extra stick or two for that sum.

Bargaining is a part of the education of these people. A young Indian came in hatless and wanted a *sombrero* (hat). He was shown one with thirty cents worth of brim by the merchant. The Indian offered twenty-eight cents which was accepted and he went away happy over his bargain. An old Indian, — and an old Indian is but a child in worldly wisdom, — brought a large cassava root, which, after considerable haggling, the merchant purchased for five cents. He bought a package of sixteen cigarettes for three cents and told the young *hacendado* that he had another "*mas grande*" (larger), which he would sell for seven cents. He went away but returned in a few minutes with the other root, and looked around at the crowd with a grin. The merchant took it but told him it was "*mas chico*" (smaller), and he could only allow four cents. The Indian came down to six and the deal was closed at five cents, the same price as the first one was sold for. He bought a glass of *mescal* for two cents and vanished in the night air, with a smile of complete satisfaction on his face. It is a simple life that these people lead, and the same scenes may be witnessed any day in the year at this little *tienda* at the Hacienda of Mitla.

"When twilight falls, more near and clear,
The tender southern skies appear."

Twilight is very brief in this land. Scarcely has the sun dropped out of sight, when the moon appears on the opposite horizon, almost a counterpart of the former in its descending glory. Then the stars appear by hundreds, and myriads, and the night in all its magnificence is upon you, where, but a few minutes before, was the brightness of day. And the overhanging canopy of the heavens seems so much brighter, and clearer, and nearer than in our more northerly land.

As the hour grew late, I wandered forth from the little store and walked through the narrow, winding streets of the village. It was one of those brilliant tropical nights when the southern skies seemed ablaze with the light of innumerable stars, and the Queen of the Night was in her glory. It was such a night as would have appealed to the astronomers of old. The streets were silent except for the howling of some dogs near by. The porch of the *hacienda* was crowded with reclining figures wrapped in their *sarapes*. A belated traveller came up and with a sigh of relief deposited his load, and joined the sleeping crowd. A match illumed a dark face for a moment as he lit a

cigarette. Finally, all voices ceased and quiet reigned supreme. It was a silence as deep and mysterious as that of the ruined city that lay but a few rods away.

CHAPTER VII

THE ISTHMUS OF TEHUANTEPEC

A TRIP from Vera Cruz to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec takes the traveller into the very centre of the tropics in Mexico. It is a most interesting ride. The entire journey is within the *tierra caliente* region and throughout the whole distance of two hundred and fifty miles there are only slight undulations that could hardly be truthfully called hills. It is not all jungle for there are plains that are sometimes several miles in width which furnish rich pasture for great herds of cattle. Here again is seen the picturesque Mexican cowboy riding his pony and carrying the ever-present lasso. The heavy saddles in this hot climate and especially the twisted bits which are universally used upon the horses in Mexico seem like a cruel imposition upon their faithful steeds. With this combination of rings and bars a rider could almost break the jaw of a horse.

It is absolutely impossible for an animal to drink with this bit in his mouth.

This leads me to remark that the finer sensibilities with regard to the treatment of domesticated animals and fowls are generally absent among Mexicans. The poor burros which are obliged to travel day after day with great sores on their backs that are continually chafed by the loads they are carrying, and saddle mules with similar sores, excite no compassion from the average Mexican. No doubt many of these animals are obliged to work for months and possibly years, when every step under a load or the weight of a man must cause them suffering. They are seldom shod, and many an animal is obliged to travel over the rough trails until his hoofs are worn down to the sensitive part. Cruel spurs are jabbed into his sides until they are raw. I have already spoken of the bull-fight and cock-fighting. From a book "On the Mexican Highlands" I quote another form of cruelty:—

"The stocky, swarthy Indian woman calmly broke the thigh bone of each leg and the chief bone of each wing, so that escape might be impossible, and proceeded right then and there to pick the chicken alive. She was evidently unconscious of any thought of cruelty. The

legs and wings were broken in order that the bird might not run or fly away. The sentiment of pity and tenderness for dumb things had not yet dawned upon her mind, and the fowl destined for the pot received no consideration at her hands."

There are many villages along this route but no cities. Several broad rivers and innumerable small streams are crossed. The engines burn wood, and it is necessary to stop on several occasions and load up the tender with fuel. At Tierra Blanca are located the shops and division headquarters of the road. As the Isthmus is approached the tropical swamps become more frequent and the train passes through miles of territory where "still stands the forest primeval," a jungle of trees and shrubs intermingled with countless varieties of palms; impenetrable forests with creepers and parasites hanging from the boughs of trees, and replanting themselves in the moist earth. Within these jungles the "tigre" roams and beneath the heavy undergrowth, horrid, venomous snakes crawl. Overhead fly noisy parrots and paroquets in couples and flocks with all of the colours of the rainbow reflected from their gaudy feathers. Then in

the waters of these streams live hundreds of repulsive alligators.

At certain seasons of the year the Indians live almost entirely upon the wild products of the forest. Nature furnishes fruits, and with the blow-gun or other weapon enough game can be killed to fill the larder. With a natural laziness and in an enervating climate the natives prefer existence of this kind to the more artificial one made necessary by labour.

The Vera Cruz and Pacific Railway connects with the Tehuantepec railway at Santa Lucrecia, a small village with a poor hotel. Here it was my lot to be obliged to spend Christmas Eve and the greater part of Christmas day. My companions were an Englishman and a Scotchman. The Englishman rummaged around in the little store and found a canned plum pudding, which rather cheered him and his compatriot and I was invited to share in their good fortune. However the heavens seemed to open up and let the water pour down in torrents and the mud was apparently bottomless so that our explorations were confined to the hotel porch. In spite of the plum pudding my spirits were rather low and I was reminded of Touchstone wandering in the Forest of Arden, when he says:—

"When I was at home I was in a better place,
But travellers must be content."

It was a real pleasure to step into a fine American coach drawn by an American engine and run by an American crew bound for the chief town of the Isthmus and the one that gave it its name.

Tehuantepec is a place where some twenty thousand souls are trying to solve the problem of existence under favourable skies. In this city of a hot midday sun and little rain the strenuous life has few disciples. It is situated on the Pacific slope of the Cordillera on both banks of a broad river and only a few miles from the ocean. It is composed of low, one-storied buildings, many of which show cracks that are the result of the earthquake shocks which sometimes visit here. The streets are narrow and the centre of the town is the market plaza. Until the opening of the railroad, which runs through the centre of the town, strangers were almost unknown and the quaint customs, costumes and habits still remain. The market and the river furnish the only life. The latter is always made lively and interesting to the stranger because of the crowds of bathers in the stream and washerwomen on the banks. It is an animated scene and has an air

THE MARKET, TEHUANTEPEC

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of naturalness devoid of any false ideas of modesty. These Indians belong to the Zapotec tribe and they are among the cleanest people in the world, as a race, as the long lines of bathers of both sexes from early dawn until nightfall attest. Woman's rights are recognized and undisputed among these people. The women run the place and do ninety per cent. of the business. The wife must vouch for the husband before he can obtain credit. In the market place where most of the bartering is done she reigns supreme.

The Isthmus of Tehuantepec is the narrowest neck of land in Mexico between the two great oceans and, with the exception of the Isthmus of Panama, is the narrowest point on the continent. The soil is extremely rich and the natural products and resources of the Isthmus are numerous and varied. All products indigenous to the tropics grow here. Different sections, according to elevation, are especially adapted to the cultivation of corn, cacao, tobacco, rice and sugar cane. Medicinal plants, spices, all tropical fruits, vanilla, indigo and cotton also will grow profitably in this climate. Cochineal dye has for a long time come from the Tehuantepec region, but this industry has

been displaced by the more recent chemical dyes.

The forests abound in game and the rivers and lagoons in fish. The forests yield useful timbers, such as mahogany, also dyewoods and trees producing gums and balsams. Oil in paying quantities has been discovered in several places and the Tehuantepec National Railway, which crosses the isthmus, is one of the few roads in the world that uses oil for fuel. There are also profitable salt deposits. A great deal of American and European capital has been sunk in unsuccessful plantations along this route. This has been due to illogical and dishonest promotion. The fertile soil will produce immense crops of the things adapted for cultivation. With this fact in view it seems strange to see one abandoned plantation after another as you journey over the two hundred miles separating Coatzacoalcos and Salina Cruz, the two termini of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec trans-continental and inter-oceanic railroad route. In the matter of climate the Mexicans claim a great superiority for Tehuantepec over Panama, because of the strong winds that blow constantly from ocean to ocean.

For centuries this isthmus has attracted a

great deal of attention from explorers and engineers in the effort to discover or provide the most convenient and economical route between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Cortez first realized the necessity of such a route and explored this whole section in the hope of finding a natural strait. It is even claimed that he conceived the idea of a canal across this narrow strip of land. Failing in these projects he planned a carriage road from coast to coast, which was finally constructed by the Spaniards. Many of the miners who flocked to California during the gold excitement went by this highway. Later civil engineers proposed and advocated a canal by this route even before the Panama route was seriously considered. The distance from ocean to ocean is only one hundred and twenty-five miles in a bee line. The land is comparatively level and the rise on the Atlantic side is very gradual culminating in the Chivela Pass at a height of seven hundred and thirty feet. From here to the Pacific the descent is more abrupt. A ship railway was at one time seriously considered and liberal concessions were granted by the Mexican government to the American engineer James B. Eads and his associates. This project although considered feasible by engi-

neers has never been able to enlist capital for its construction.

The Panama Canal under French control was a colossal failure. A project which for a time seemed to promise a solution of the problem for a quick and economical route between the East and West ended in lamentable disgrace and for a long time remained in what one of our former presidents would have called, a condition of "innocuous desuetude." When the United States undertook this great enterprise, the completion of this desirable waterway was placed at ten years or even less. Now at the end of four years we are credibly informed that little has been done except the completion of plans, surveys, purchase of machinery and necessary sanitation. All of these preliminaries were essential and will greatly facilitate the real work when once started. All loyal Americans believe in the ultimate successful completion of this great undertaking. Yet, instead of ten years, we can see that fifteen years, or even twenty years would be a more accurate statement of the time necessary to complete the severing of the two continents. In the meantime, what?

While other countries have been planning, the Mexican government with the characteris-

tic foresight shown by President Diaz has been quietly preparing to meet the problem of a short and economical route between the two oceans. This has been done without the blowing of horns and few people were aware until recently of what was being done and what had really been accomplished. The government of Mexico decided upon the plan of constructing a railway across the Isthmus from Coatzacoalcos, on the Gulf of Mexico, to Salina Cruz, on the Pacific Ocean, a distance of one hundred and ninety-four miles. Most railroads in tropical lands are narrow gauge but this line is constructed of standard width and was completed in 1895. When first opened to traffic the road was in a very imperfect condition. In 1899 a contract was entered into between the government and the English house of Pearson and Sons whereby the two parties became joint owners of the road for a period of fifty years and the net earnings should be shared on an equitable basis.

The construction was of a difficult character because the route passed through some cañons, rocky cuts and a great deal of swampy soil. The work has been well done and it is one of the best roads in Mexico to-day, with good equipment and traffic managed in an up-

to-date and businesslike manner. Already large orders for equipment have been placed and plans for double-tracking the entire road have been drawn. The headquarters and general offices are at Rincon Antonio, which is at the highest point and has the appearance of a typical new English town with its red brick terraces. This town receives the full benefit of the winds constantly blowing across the isthmus and enjoys a pleasant and salubrious climate. The shops and roundhouse for the railroad have been built at this place also and the employees are all comfortably housed. Some of the officers have built very commodious homes of their own, with every possible convenience. This town is in marked contrast with the old Mexican towns and villages along the route.

The general officers of the road and head men in the port works at both termini are all English and Americans. Formerly they were English, but in recent years the Americans have been replacing the English, as they have been found more satisfactory and better adapted for the work.

The government soon learned that the railway without good harbours was a poor proposition. The plans of the government were

then made to include immense port works and safe, commodious harbours at Coatzacoalcos and Salina Cruz. At the former place the river forms a natural harbour of an average depth of fifty feet at low water. The only problem here was to remove a sand bar and construct piers. The work of removing the bar has been completed and several large steel wharves and warehouses have already been constructed and others are in course of construction. The total frontage of the wharves when completed will be over three thousand feet. It is intended to have a minimum depth of thirty-three feet alongside of the wharves which will be equipped with every modern contrivance for unloading cargo quickly and economically from ships, and transferring to the railroad and vice versa.

The work at Salina Cruz presented far greater problems. It has demanded the maximum of engineering skill and an immense sum of money. Here nature had aided in no way and everything had to be done by human effort. On account of severe wind storms it was deemed necessary to construct both an outer and an inner harbour in order to make a perfectly safe anchorage at all times and the work was begun in 1900. The outer harbour is being

formed by thrusting two massive breakwaters like immense arms out into the bay with an entrance six hundred feet wide. The longest of these breakwaters will be three thousand feet, consisting of three sections, of different angles, with the convex sides toward the sea. The other is only one-half as extensive. The foundation for these breakwaters is started thirty feet below low water mark and in some places is two hundred feet in width. Upon a rubble foundation immense blocks of concrete and natural rock are placed at random. Then on top are placed regular rows of forty-ton concrete blocks. The amount of material already used and needed to complete this work is almost inconceivable. More than three-fourths of the largest breakwater is already completed. The inner basin will be wholly artificial and will occupy in part the site of the old town of Salina Cruz with an entrance [illegible] feet wide. Immense dredges are now at work on this basin which will be large enough to accommodate whole fleets of the largest vessels afloat. From two thousand to [illegible] men have been and are still employed, the majority being natives.

[illegible] the harbour at Salina Cruz is still [illegible] this route was formally opened on

January 23rd, 1907. In the presence of a great throng of notables, including the representatives of twenty nations, President Diaz touched a lever which set in motion a steam winch that was used to carry the first load of cargo from a steamer to a freight car. After this car had been loaded it was transferred to Coatzacoalcos and the President touched another lever that set in motion the machinery for unloading the car and transferring the freight to a waiting steamer. In this manner was opened a route that is destined to take a prominent part in the handling of the world's commerce, and which has cost the Mexican government more than $25,000,000 in gold, and the end is not yet. After four hundred years the dream of Cortez has come true and the isthmian highway is open to the world.

What advantages are claimed for this route? The benefit to Mexico is self-evident. It will greatly facilitate the commerce between the two long coast lines of the republic. This great undertaking was not begun for the national trade alone. It is intended to compete for all that traffic which has heretofore gone around Cape Horn, through the Straits of Magellan, or across the Panama railroad. The Tehuantepec route is one thousand, two hun-

dred and fifty miles shorter between New York and San Francisco than the Panama route. The average freight steamer would require from four to five days to cover this distance. The managers of the Tehuantepec National railroad propose to unload a cargo, carry it across the isthmus and reload it in two days. It will probably require one day for a vessel to pass through the Panama canal. This would make a net saving of from three to four days for the Tehuantepec route. The extra cost of loading and unloading would be made up by the saving of canal dues and expenses of the ship for that period. Thus there will be a net saving of three to four days in shipment, which might be quite a feature with many classes of freight. In cheapness of transportation, the continental railroads of the United States could not compete. Already contracts have been made with a line of steamers which have heretofore run between San Francisco, Hawaii and New York via Cape Horn to transfer their freight by this route. The government claims to have more freight in sight for 1907 than the Panama railroad has ever carried in a single year.

This route has been lost sight of in the enthusiasm over the Panama canal. It will be

completed several years before the canal and will during that interim, at least, have a great advantage over the present Panama railroad route. The same necessity of transhipment exists there but without the fine, safe harbours, modern and commodious docks, and the quick loading and unloading machinery with which the Tehuantepec route is equipped. As all the energy of the United States will be devoted to digging the canal, it is not likely to improve the facilities for loading and unloading either at Panama or Colon.

CHAPTER VIII

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE ANCIENTS

"Builded on the ruins of dead thrones
Whose temple walls were old when Thebes was new;
On altars whose weird sacrificial stones
With ghastly offerings were crimsoned through;
Oblivion hides and holds thy secrets fast—
The dust of ages lies upon thy past,
All wonderful, mysterious Mexico." [1]

Mexico is a land of ruins and the footprints of former races can be traced all over the southern half of the country. These ruins teach us that it must have taken many centuries to develop the land into the condition in which it was found by the Spaniards. It was not only the growth of a long time, but it was the product of the civilization developed by many different races and tribes. Otherwise Mexico would not be filled to-day with a hundred tribes speaking as many distinct dialects. There are many ruins of cities extending from the Valley of Mexico to the remotest corner

[1] "Wonderful, Mysterious Mexico," by Madge Morris.

of Yucatan, and many of them show evidences of wonderful structures that are the amazement of even the present generation. Not buried beneath volcanic lava, like Pompeii and Herculaneum, yet all are silent cities, for their inhabitants departed hundreds, perhaps, thousands of years ago. A few broken columns now remain where doubtless whole cities once stood.

Nothing is known of the history of these cities. The Spanish priests, with fanatical frenzy, destroyed all of the picture writings of the Aztecs that they could lay their hands upon. So many were destroyed, some chroniclers say, that great bonfires were made. What light these manuscripts might have cast upon the history of these early races cannot even be conjectured. As Prescott says, "it is impossible to contemplate these mysterious monuments of a lost civilization without a strong feeling of curiosity as to who were their architects and what is their probable age." They are undoubtedly very old, and some claim they are as old as the architecture of Egypt and Hindoostan. They have marked Eastern characteristics, as in the hieroglyphical writings at Palenque, in Yucatan, where are ruins of a palace and supposed holy city, with many

sculptured figures of human and animal beings. The same is true of Uxmal, also in that same quaint and interesting corner of Mexico. These writings never have been and probably never will be deciphered. Then at Palenque can be traced the outline of the Roman cross which has greatly mystified antiquarians. We can only speculate on the origin of these monuments; whence came the people who constructed them; and in what period of the earth's history they were built; but speculation proves nothing and convinces nobody.

East of the City of Mexico about twenty-seven miles lies the village of San Juan Teotihuacan. Near this hamlet are traces of a great city covering more than four square miles, and remains of walls and fortifications, a part of the wall that still stands being more than two hundred feet thick and thirty-two feet high. The most marked features of these ruins are the numerous pyramids, great and small, which lie scattered over the plain. Teotihuacan means "City of the Gods," and doubtless these pyramidal structures were a necessary part of a holy city in the eyes of the race that constructed them, and were mounds of worship. Otherwise why would a race build

such great structures at such an infinite cost of labour?

The largest of these numerous pyramids is called the "Pyramid of the Sun," which has a base seven hundred feet square, and a height of one hundred and eight-seven feet. The next largest is the "Pyramid of the Moon," which is one hundred and thirty-seven feet high, and has a base four hundred and fifty feet square. At a distance the pyramids seem rather insignificant, and their outlines resemble an ordinary steep-sided hill, but on nearer approach they are better appreciated. The comparison with the noted pyramids of Egypt would, at first glance, seem unfavourable, for the vegetation and vines that cover the sides rather hide the pyramidal outline. They were probably higher originally, but the destructive work of man and action of the elements have reduced the size. Recent investigation shows that these pyramids are built in layers of volcanic rock, cement, pottery and sun-dried brick. There are five layers — each layer being a complete pyramid in itself.

It is supposed that on the summit of each pyramid was a platform which supported great golden images of the sun and moon respectively, but no vestige of any such image has

ever been discovered. If made of gold, and the Spaniards set their eyes on it, it would not have remained long. Authorities differ as to whether the Toltecs, or a race that preceded them, erected these mighty structures. The Mexican government has undertaken the work of restoring the two pyramids, and has appropriated a large sum of money to carry on the work. Several hundred labourers are now engaged in denuding them of the soil and growth of centuries that covers them.

Near Puebla, and situated in a rich and beautiful valley, of which mention has been made elsewhere, is the most noted pyramid in Mexico — that of Cholula. Legend says that it was built by a race of giants who intended to raise it to the very heavens themselves, but that the gods became displeased and destroyed them. It is very similar in nature to the Hebrew story of the Tower of Babel. Because of its great base, which is more than a thousand feet on each side, and covers twenty acres, and has a height of only one hundred and seventy-seven feet, it looks like a natural elevation that has been squared in places and levelled at the top rather than a pyramid. Like the other pyramids the sides are overgrown with trees and bushes. Examination shows

that it has been constructed of sun-dried brick, clay and limestone. I quote the dimensions of two of the most famous Egyptian pyramids in order that the reader may better understand the comparative height and base of those and the Mexican structures:

	HEIGHT.	BASE ON EACH SIDE
Cheops,	448 feet	728 feet
Mycerinus,	162 "	580 "
Cholula,	177 "	1,000 "
Sun	187 "	700 "
Moon	137 "	450 "

This valley was sacred in early times. Cortez says he counted four hundred towers in the city of Cholula (a much larger city then than now), and no temple had more than two towers. Above the city loomed the great pyramid, on the summit of which stood a sumptuous temple in which was the image of the mystic deity, Quetzalcoatl. He had "ebon features, wearing a mitre on his head waving with plumes of fire, with a resplendent collar of gold around his neck, pendants of mosaic turquoise on his ears, a jewelled sceptre in one hand, and a shield curiously painted, the emblem of his rule over the winds, in the other." This was the god who drew pilgrims and de-

votees by the thousands from the farthest corners of Anahuac.

This god was credited with power over rains, and was appealed to especially in time of drouth. Bandelier, who made an exhaustive study of this district, translates an early Spanish writer as follows: "To this god they prayed whenever they lacked water, and sacrificed to it children from six to ten years of age, whom they captured or bought for the purpose. When they sacrificed, they carried the children up the hill in procession, whither went some old men singing, and before the idol they cut the child open with a knife, taking out the heart, and they burnt incense to the idol and afterwards buried the baby there before the idol." Thus it is seen that the Nahuatl tribe, who occupied this valley, pursued the same bloody rites as the Aztecs.

The first act of Cortez was to destroy this temple and erect a Christian church on the spot, so that spires and crosses have replaced the pagan towers. All over the valley are many great churches so conspicuous in comparison with the humble homes of the natives. The view from the summit of this ancient structure is grand and imposing. John L. Stoddard is inspired by this scene and speaks

as follows: "Whatever else of Mexico may be forgotten, I shall remember to my latest breath that wonderfully impressive vision from Cholula. Before me rose, against the darkening sky, a mighty cross, the sculptured proof that here Christianity had proved victorious; and as I lingered, my feet upon the Aztec pyramid, my hand upon the symbol of the conqueror's faith, my eyes turned towards that everlasting pinnacle of snow, I thought the lesson of Cholula to be this: that higher, grander, and far more enduring than all the different religions of humanity are the Eternal Power they imperfectly reveal; and that above the temples, pyramids, and crosses, which mark the blood-stained pathway of our race, rises a lofty mountain peak, whose glory falls alike upon the Aztec and the Spaniard, and in whose heaven-born radiance all races and all centuries may find their inspiration and their hope."

The Valley of Oaxaca seems to have been the favourite dwelling place of one or more of the early races of Mexico. All over the vales that centre at Oaxaca, and on the surrounding hills, are ruins of former cities and palaces that strongly resemble in outline and decoration the works of the Ptolemies and

Pharaohs. Next to Mitla, the most noted ruins in this valley are those of Monte Alban. The site of this ancient city is four miles from Oaxaca on the summit of a mountain, about eleven hundred feet above the valley. The ruins extend for a distance of more than a mile along the ridge, and enclose a great rectangular, depressed court nine hundred feet long, and three hundred feet in width. There are some well-preserved, sculptured stones with pictorial inscriptions, and images of gods. Because of its situation, which commands a complete view of these valleys in every direction, it is supposed that this place was intended for defence and a place of refuge in troublous times. The view from the summit is magnificent and well repays the traveller for a couple of hours' ride on the back of that sadly-wise, and much-maligned animal — the Mexican mule.

The village of Mitla is situated about twenty-five miles south-east of Oaxaca. It is best visited from that city by coach or mules. We hired a coach and driver, an unprepossessing looking outfit, and started on the journey.

"How long will it take?" I asked the driver.

"*A las doce,*" he replied in idiomatic Span-

ish, meaning that we would arrive at twelve o'clock. As we had started at seven o'clock, that made it a five hours' journey.

About an hour's ride out of Oaxaca is the village of Tule, where, in the churchyard, and overshadowing the sacred structure, stands the famous Big Tree of Tule which deserves a passing notice. Although not a ruin, it is a relic of prehistoric days long gone by. This venerable giant is one of the largest trees in the world, exceeding in circumference the famous redwoods of California, and equalling the largest reported specimens of the gigantic baobab of Africa. This great tree is one hundred and fifty-four feet in circumference six feet above the ground. Twenty-eight people with their hands outstretched, and touching their finger tips, can just encircle its great girth. The height is one hundred and sixty feet, and the spread of the branches one hundred and forty feet. It is a species of the cypress called by the Aztecs *ahuehuete*. The great traveller, Humboldt, visited this tree about the middle of the last century and affixed a tablet containing his name and an inscription. As a proof that this old cypress is still growing, one sees that this tablet is now almost grown over with bark nearly a foot thick.

Tule is a quaint village where the thatched huts are enclosed by fences of the prickly cactus, called *organo*, because of the resemblance of its branches to the pipes of an organ, and the lanes are shaded by trees. Underneath the higher trees grow the orange and lemon, while the oleander and other flowering bushes add their brightness to the scene.

After being held up for a road charge of seven cents by the officials of the village, which we paid, the driver is allowed to proceed. We pass through villages with the poetical names of Tlacolulu and Tlacochahuaya. As the coach bounces along the rough highway, over the road on a hillside are seen caves where human beings live who are literally cliff-dwellers. Then the valley opens up, and far ahead is seen San Pablo Mitla a typical Indian village built around the *hacienda* of Don Felix Quero, who is a sort of feudal lord over the neighbouring peons. Good entertainment is furnished for the traveller, and it is delightful to rest within the high walls of this hospitable stopping-place.

The first mention of the ruins at this village is by a Spanish writer nearly four centuries ago. His description would not be much amiss to-day. It is as follows: " We passed through

a pueblo which is called Mictlan, signifying 'hell' in the native tongue, where were found some edifices more worth seeing than anything else in New Spain. Among them was a temple of the demon, and the dwelling of its attendants — very sightly, particularly one hall made of something like lattice work. The fabric was of stone, with many figures and shapes; it had many doorways, each one built of three great stones, two at the sides and one at the top, all very thick and wide. In these quarters there was another hall containing round pillars, each one of a single piece, and so thick that two men could barely embrace them; their height might be five fathoms."

To what purposes were these truly magnificent structures dedicated? Were they palaces, temples, tombs, fortresses, dwelling places, storehouses or places of refuge? Neither archeologists nor antiquarians have satisfactorily answered these questions. According to many of the leading archeologists they are the most interesting and best preserved ruins in North America. Here was a great city built by a race prior to the Aztecs, for that race could tell the Spanish conquerors nothing of its builders. The secrets guarded by the huge monoliths of stone, and the high mosaic-cov-

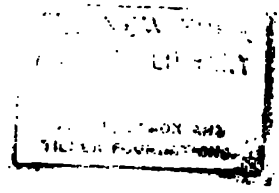
ered walls of Mitla are safe from prying eyes. Not one city alone stood here, for there are many remains of walls, columns and huge monoliths thrown down similar to these, scattered all over this valley. The best authority says that they were used for tombs but this could not have been the only use. They were probably also used for places of worship, public purposes, or cities of refuge, or perhaps for all those purposes.

A close investigation shows that there are five distinct groups of the ruins, but some of them are in badly preserved condition. The village covers the site of a part of them. There is a similarity in the structure of all, as the outer walls are composed of oblong panels of mosaic forming arabesques and grecques. At first sight, or at a distance, it looks like sculptured designs on the walls. Closer inspection reveals the fact that this mosaic is formed of pieces of stone accurately cut and fitted into the face of the walls. These pieces are about seven inches in length, one inch in thickness, and two in breadth. The patterns cannot well be described as they are so complicated. All the ornamentation consists of geometrical figures, either rectangular or diagonal, and differs from all other ruins

ENTRANCE TO THE UNDERGROUND CHAMBER, MITLA

NORTH TEMPLE, MITLA

HALL OF THE MONOLITHS, MITLA



in Mexico, in that there are no human or animal figures.

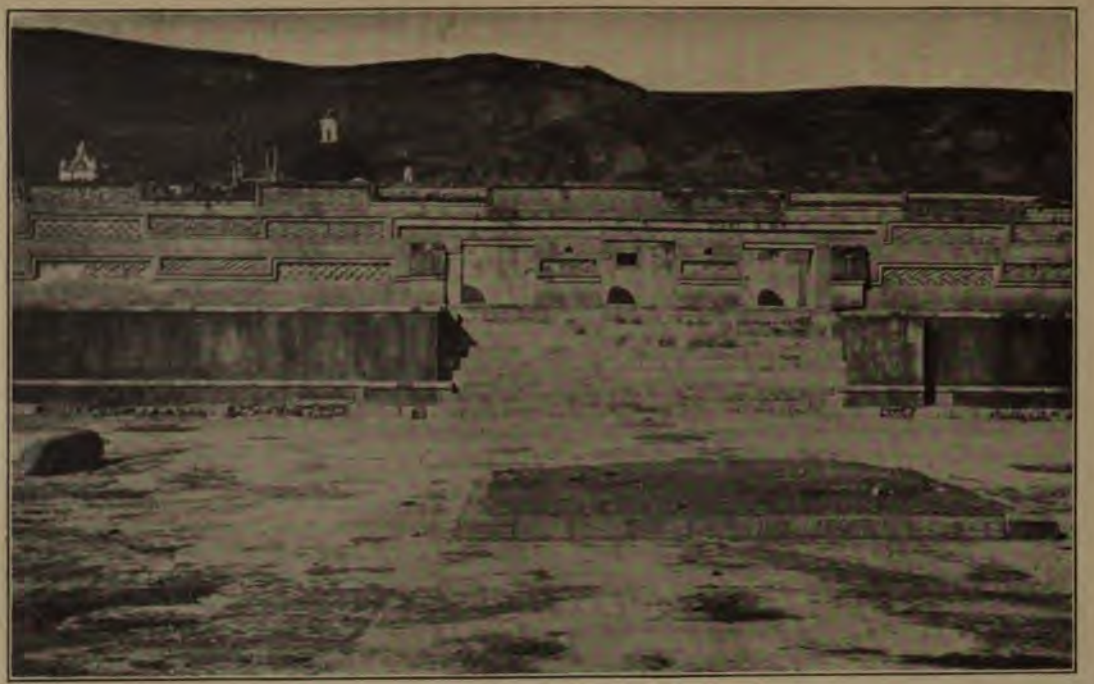
There is an underground chamber beneath one of the temples, built in the shape of a cross with each arm about twelve feet long. The sides are worked into the same mosaic pattern as the rest of the walls. It is generally believed that these chambers were tombs, although some contend that they were the entrance to subterranean passages leading long distances away. If so, the passages were filled up long ago.

The northwestern group is in the best state of preservation. One of the buildings here covers nearly eight thousand square feet, and has all its massive walls intact with scarcely a stone thrown down. The characteristic entrance, consisting of three doors, side by side, is seen here also, fronting the interior of the court. The lintels are immense blocks of stone eighteen feet long, five feet wide and four feet high. How these immense stones were transported to this spot and raised without the aid of machinery, is as great a mystery as similar accomplishments by the Egyptians. Through these doors the famous Hall of Monoliths, or Columns, is reached. This is a wonderful relic of prehistoric architecture. The six mono-

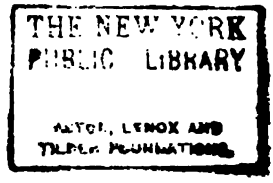
lithic columns, still standing in this room are each twelve feet in height and almost nine feet in circumference. They are plain stones having neither pedestal nor capital and are unique among the ruins of the world.

Torquemada, an old Spanish historian, writes of this hall in the following quaint style: "There was in those Edifices, or Square of the Temple, another Hall, all framed around Pillars of Stone; very high and so thick that scarce might two Men of good height embrace them so as to touch finger tips the one with the other. And these Pillars were all of one piece; and they say that all the Pillars and Columns, from top to bottom, was four Fathoms. The Pillars were very like to those of St. Mary, the Greater, of Rome, all very well and smoothly wrought." This hall is more than a hundred feet long, and twenty feet wide. These great stones may have supported a roof formerly but there is no evidence of it at the present time.

From the Hall of the Monoliths a dark, stone-covered passage leads into a room called the Audience Chamber. This is a splendid room with its walls in carved mosaics, or a setting of tiles, after the Grecian models. There are four long, narrow rooms, or corridors, on



THE MAIN COURT, MITLA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either side of this main chamber without other entrance except the one just mentioned. One of these, the West room, is most beautiful and is nearly perfect, as scarcely a tile is broken or missing from its exquisitely inlaid walls which at first inspection look like stucco work. The tiles are so accurately inlaid that no mortar was used, or needed, to hold them in place. This is the Corridor of the Mosaics. There are also traces of a lustrous, dark, red paint, used on a hard cement plaster. It is quite probable that all the buildings in the five groups were as carefully constructed and as exquisitely ornamented as this one, but they have been destroyed by succeeding races.

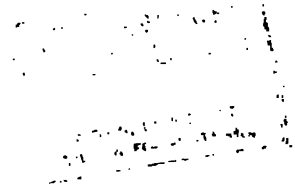
North of this group was another ruin on the walls of which a Christian church has been built. Most of the materials used in its construction came from this old temple or palace. The sacristy of this church is formed in part of a portion of the old building, and covered with a tile roof. This structure was the largest of all in size, extending over a space nearly three hundred feet long by one hundred feet wide, and with walls from five to six feet in thickness. One room is now used as a stable, and contains some strange hieroglyphics done in a lustrous red paint which have never been

deciphered. These are the only semblance to anything like writing, or historical inscriptions, that appear anywhere in the ruins. In the centre of the main court is a hard cement pavement laid out in the form of a square with a cut stone border. This may have been intended for ornament or for human sacrifices. The latter conjecture might not be erroneous, knowing, as we do, the customs of those early Mexican races.

There are many other evidences of ruins near Mitla. Clay idols, or images, made of terra-cotta are found all over the neighbourhood. Children hunt for specimens and bring them to tourists for sale. It is also said that many stone wedges, and copper chisels and axes, have been discovered here but I did not see any of them.

Who built these ruins? Bancroft, the historian of Mexico, says that they were built by the Zapotecs at an early period of their civilization. The Indians now inhabiting this valley are Zapotecs and they are a primitive, simple and harmless race. If these people, who now dwell in thatch hovels and caves, were the once proud race that erected these magnificent structures, then we must say, "How have the mighty fallen." What must these

A ZAPOTECO WOMAN



structures have been in the heyday of their prosperity that they are now so glorious in their mellow decay? The famous Palace of the Alhambra, glorious monument to the genius of the Moor, is scarcely more magnificent than these ruins lying here within the little Indian village of Mitla. The traveller can give his imagination full play for there is no written history to destroy the scenes he creates. He can in fancy re-create these beautiful structures; people these courts and halls with royalty, priests or warriors; make the air vocal with the chants of priests or shrieks of the victims of human sacrifice; and there is no one or no record to rebuke him.

CHAPTER IX

WOMAN AND HER SPHERE

THE life and position of woman in Mexico varies much by reason of the heterogeneous character of the population. Because of the absence of a clearly defined middle class it is a fairly safe proposition to say that there are but two classes in Mexico, Creoles and Indians. Creoles include all those who are Europeans or in whom the European blood predominates. Domestic life among the Creole class savours of the East. The ideas with respect to women are Moorish rather than American. Although not obliged to appear on the street with face enshrouded in a shawl or veil, yet the young woman who has respect for her good name would not go abroad without the *duenna,* or some female companion. Another reminder of Oriental exclusiveness is seen in the life of the ladies of the wealthier classes who always drive in closed carriages even in this land of

balmy air and splendid sunshine and, when shopping, do not deign to leave the carriage.

On account of the restrictions against the appearance of women in public, the custom grew up in Spain and Mexico of allowing them to use the windows and balconies for observation. In the cool of the evening the windows on the streets are opened and women, especially the young ladies, appear there to watch the carriages and passers-by and nod to their friends. The home life and social restrictions toward women are inherited from Spanish ancestors who were at one time the aristocracy and ruling class of Mexico. Nowhere is the sentiment of home stronger than among the Creoles. There may be no such word as home in his vocabulary but the *casa,* or house, of the Mexican is his castle and he protects it in every way from prying eyes. One writer has expressed his view as follows: — "The intense feeling of individuality which so strongly marks the Spanish character and which in the political world is so fatal an element of strife and obstruction, favours this peculiar domesticity. The Castillian is submissive to his king and his priest; haughty and inflexible with his equals. But his own house is a refuge from the contests of out of doors."

In the home the father is absolute lord and master and all bow to him. There never comes a time when the children are not subject more or less to parental authority. Yet, in general, the sway is so mild that it is readily yielded to and is scarcely felt. Grown-up sons and daughters do not forget the respect and obedience that was expected of them when they were children. The reverence for parents increases with the passing of the years. A man never grows too old to kiss the hand of his aged mother. The old lady dressed in sombre black and who looks like a poor relation may be the one whose wishes rule. Harmony does not exist in every family and the exceptions are striking ones. Where quarrels and family dissensions do occur, the pride and jealousy of the race renders them the bitterest and fiercest in the world. These vindictive feuds in families frequently led to duels and stabbing affrays to defend personal honour and dignity in former days. A man and wife will often live for years beneath the same roof without speaking. They cannot be divorced but neither will speak the first word and each rather admires the grit of the other.

The home life is jealously shielded from curious eyes. In no place in the world is the

social circle more closely guarded than among the higher classes in the City of Mexico. The thick walls, the barred, prison-like windows and the massive, well-guarded doors prevent intrusion and perhaps serve to foster this inclination to lead exclusive lives. Cultured Americans, unless in the official set, who have lived there for years have found it impossible to break into these exclusive circles. Whether this action is due to jealousy, diffidence, a feeling of superiority, or aversion to aliens the fact remains that they are very loth to admit Americans into the privacy of their homes. The foreigner has few opportunities of judging intelligently of the women for they are immured so closely within the four walls of their dwellings. Social life in the semi-public, gregarious ways of American cities is unknown and would not suit these privacy-loving, domestic women.

In " The Awakening of a Nation " the author, Mr. C. F. Lummis, gives a very good description of the Creole woman: " Always and everywhere the Spanish-American female face is interesting; at least as often as in other bloods it is beautiful. Photographs tell but half the story, for complexion is beyond them. But a certain clearness of feature, the almost

invariable beauty of the eyes and fine strength of the brows seem as much a Spanish birthright as the high-bred hand and foot. Not even the Parisian face is so flexible in expression, so fit for archness, so graphic to the mood. Yet there is a certain presence in it not to be unnoticed, not to be forgotten. To no woman on earth is religion a more vital, ever-present, all-pervading actuality; and that is why you meet the face of the Madonna almost literally at every corner in Spanish-America. And it is not a superficial thing. There is none to whom the wife-heart, the mother-heart is truer-womanly."

The Mexican men are passionate admirers of the fair sex. Perhaps it is because of the bewitchery of their black, sparkling eyes. Certainly it is not on account of the white paste which is plastered over their faces or the rouge on their lips. Nor have they added to their attractiveness by the substitution of the Parisian hat for the graceful lace mantilla which lent itself so well to the gentle art of coquetry. There are many handsome women among the Creoles but they are not all beautiful as some writers would lead the reader to infer. They are bright, vivacious and naturally clever. They have a quick understanding which only

needs to be cultivated and perhaps this intelligence is quicker and more active than that of the men. They can weave and embroider with taste and skill. They know a little music and a little French but, in the American sense, they are not well educated. The real intellectual element is wanting and the understanding is uncultivated. The higher education for women has not received the stamp of approval in this land of " to-morrow " and the sex has not yet become an important factor in the business or professional world. " If only learned wives," says one, " are responsible for that poor, downtrodden, pitiable specimen of man called the henpecked husband, then a timid man would be safe in choosing a Mexican wife." The patriarchal element of society in which man is recognized as lord and master is still in force among these people. The question of woman's rights has never yet agitated the bosoms of these gentle women.

Domestic freedom in the sense understood by Americans is absent. The daughters are closely watched by their mothers who seldom permit them out of their sight unless accompanied by some older woman or faithful servant. Such a thing as permitting a daughter to have a young man call on her or accompany

her to the theatre would never enter the mind of the Mexican mother. In her estimation the men do not deserve any confidence until they are married. The man, of course, thinks that these precautions are unnecessarily cruel. Nevertheless mammas think they are essential, pater familias approves and so the custom remains. Perhaps it is these restrictions that are reponsible for the reputation the *señoritas*, or young women, have of being flirts or coquettes. They are overflowing with life and spirits and their black eyes look so full of mischief that sometimes they seem to be just spoiling for a flirtation. They are very animated in conversation and in talking keep time with hands, knees, shoulders, elbows and face. Their talk is full of the most extravagant and seemingly profane expressions.

" Oh, Jesus! " says one girl, " what a fetching hat."

" Mary Most Pure," replies her companion, " it must have cost five pesos."

They can stare an American out of countenance and look him straight in the eye but it is only a look of curiosity. The social pleasures resulting from the intermingling of the sexes that are so common with us are not enjoyed by them. At a dance the men retire to

one side of the room after a number and the women take seats on the opposite side. Marriages among the wealthier classes are generally made by the parents without consultation with the principals in an affair supposed to be of the hearts. After the formal engagement the intended husband is allowed to call on his fiancée in the presence of the entire family and may take her out to the theatre when accompanied by the mother and all the female members of the household. Marriage is a formidable undertaking for the groom must furnish the entire bridal outfit, in addition to the house and its furnishings. Two ceremonies become necessary, too, if the couple wish to be married by the rites of the church. The civil ceremony is absolutely essential and cannot be dispensed with for under the law this is the only legal marriage. And yet with all these inconveniences to courtship and matrimony, bachelors are less numerous than they are where every facility is granted for love making.

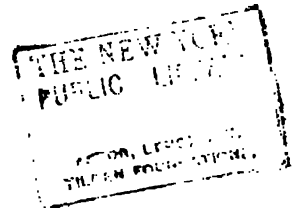
Love and religion are practically the only two subjects with which a *señorita* is expected to concern herself. She is, probably, not intentionally or by nature a flirt and she might scorn to inveigle in her meshes the heart of

an admirer, but she cannot refrain from using her irresistible eyes or entirely avoid the coquettish use of the indispensable fan with its wordless telegraphy. The Mexican lover pays extravagant homage to his sweetheart and a woman nowhere else is paid such delicate and elaborate compliments. The Spanish method of courtship in which the lady is pictured as sitting at a barred window or leaning from a balcony to listen to the honeyed phrases of her lover or the music of his guitar has reached its highest state of perfection in Mexico.

In the current language of that country a man who is courting a woman is "playing the bear." It is so named from the restless walking to and fro of the love-stricken youth in front of the window of his inamorata, in a manner not unlike a captive bear in a cage. The same method pursued in the United States would either result in a man being sent to the lunatic asylum as suffering from a "brain storm" or to the workhouse.

A young man who sees a young lady on the street whom he admires, begins by following her home although it may be days or weeks before he will venture to speak to her. Having reached her *casa* he will begin the *hacer el oso,* or "playing the bear," by walking back

"PLAYING THE BEAR"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and forth in front of the house or standing on the street with his eyes fixed upon her windows or balconies for hours at a time, days and nights alike. The young lady, if interested at all, will remain back of the curtain and the slightest movement of the curtains or blinds is a sign that she is not entirely indifferent. After a day or two she may show her face or wave her hand as a further mark of encouragement, and after several days she may appear on the balcony for a few moments. If she goes to church the lover is probably not far behind and an occasional smile or glance from her eyes of midnight is given him as a reward for his faithfulness. Next come daily salutes and smiles when the lover appears. Flowers are sent by the aid of the water-carriers or charcoal-vendors in which notes are concealed. A system of wireless-telegraphy communication is established by means of a fan on one side and a cigarette on the other. This medium of communication has been developed until it has become an elaborate code. Letters become more and more endearing. When the courtship has so far advanced that the lovers will talk, the moonlight nights are all devoted to the love-making and several pairs of lovers can be seen on almost any street by the late

home-comer — he on the sidewalk, she at the window. This courtship frequently extends over a period of years and the lover who makes himself so ridiculous sometimes loses the girl then. Jacob's seven-year probation has many counterparts among the Romeos of Mexico.

A young woman of my acquaintance and her sister recently visited a family in one of the large cities in Mexico. Like all young women they soon became interested in the subject of Mexican courtship and began to sigh for a "bear." Every time they returned from a trip down town a watch was kept from the window to see if a "bear" followed. At last one of these creatures appeared and began to pace in front of the house with his eyes bent upon the window opening out on the balcony. Contrary to all precedents and to the surprise of the neighbourhood, these women could not resist the temptation to go out on the balcony on this first occasion. This was such marked encouragement that the man came day after day to see *las Señoritas Americanas* and was still coming when their visit ended.

American women who have married Mexican husbands have found the ideas of the two races so radically opposed that the unions have not been harmonious. Their verdict is that a Mex-

ican man makes an ideal lover because of his delicate attentions and consideration, but an unsatisfactory husband since he does not make his wife a companion and confidante such as an American woman considers her right and privilege.

The individuality of the woman is not so completely merged in that of her husband at marriage as in the United States. The woman retains her own name but adds that of her husband. Miss Mary Smith who marries Mr. John Jones becomes Mrs. Mary Smith de Jones, and she is not called so exclusively by her husband's name. However, when the Mexican woman is married she accommodates herself to the station in life provided by her husband. The wife usually accepts whatever condition fate has provided for her and bears it with patience and fortitude. They endure the petty ills of life with great cheerfulness. They do not go into society much as custom keeps them from attending mixed assemblages frequently. Their world is generally confined to their home, husband and children. An American woman would sigh for liberty if compelled to live this life. The Mexican woman in America shrinks from the freedom prevalent here and desires the seclusion of her native land. Families are

usually large so that home duties require a great deal of attention. The respect and courtesy paid by children to their parents is truly delightful to witness and shows a real goodness of heart in them.

The mother cannot bear to see her family separated. She wants them all to stay close together so that each one can stop in and see her every day. The mothers are loving and tender and idolize their boys. It is regarded as a terrible thing, scarcely to be borne, for their sons to go out into the world as American youths do. To go to a distant city is like being transported to Australia. Even when they remain near home the mothers are very solicitous for fear they will work too hard. On each saint's day, which is religiously observed, presents are given and an old-fashioned dinner, to which all the cousins, aunts and uncles are invited, is served. In starting on a journey to a not-distant city, the youth must visit all his relatives in the neighbourhood and bid adieu.

It is interesting to notice these traits in an age of growing indifference; but not a little of the lack of progress in Mexico can be attributed to this unwillingness to sever home ties. Many of these young men could do better for

themselves away from home but a mother's pleadings and a mother's tears keep them at home. Even after marriage they frequently continue to live under the same roof.

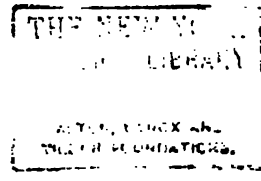
The religious element enters very largely into the life of women. Their very names are a constant reminder of their worship. Many of them are christened Mary with one of the attributes of the Virgin or some incident in the life of the Virgin added such as Conception, Annunciation, Sorrows or Assumption. Or there are the attributes such as Mary of the Sorrows, of the Gifts, Miracles, Tears, etc. Religion is sustained by the women and you will seldom see men at the services unless it is some poor Indian. They are very pious in their way and attend to their religious duties with the same interest that they perform their toilet. The concrete symbols and observances of the church have a great influence over them. At mass these pious worshippers always dress in sombre black. They are very particular in training their children in the principles of the Church. Formerly great faith was placed in the healing power of certain shrines and relics but this is now dying out under the advance of modern physicians and their healing remedies. They are still great

believers in signs, omens and other supernatural manifestations.

Above all these women are kind hearted and charitable. Though carefully guarding their homes, yet if a stranger is admitted into the family he is received with a generous welcome. Should he return after long absence, he is greeted almost as one of the family and without reservation. He is not only permitted but encouraged to call all the members by their given names and to use the pronoun *tu* or "thou" in his intercourse with them. This is an especial privilege among Spanish people who are very particular about familiarity in address. They will oftentimes deprive themselves for a friend. They have their faults too. Although smoking is not countenanced in public it is said that many of them smoke in their boudoirs and in the company of friends of their own sex. A great deal has been said of their lack of morality but this is a subject upon which only those very familiar with the facts should dare to speak, for it cannot be treated lightly, or solely with the intention of casting a slur on another race.

The lives of the Indian women of Mexico present a far different picture. Instead of living in great palaces, their homes are in little

WASHING ON THE BANKS OF A STREAM



adobe cabins of one room, perhaps without the luxury of a window, or in bamboo huts covered with plantain leaves without chairs or table and only a mat of husks for a bed. There is no seclusion in their lives and the real duties of life begin at a very early age. I cannot call them serious duties for it is doubtful if these people regard any of the obligations of life as very serious. Their early experiences are with its hard realities. They can be seen on the streets and around their homes with baby brothers or sisters swung across their backs when they themselves are so small that the burden seems far too heavy for them. On the banks of the streams they can be seen doing the family washing with a great amount of rubbing and pounding and wringing. To the fountains and wells they come carrying earthen jars on their heads, which they fill with water and replace with a grace and charm that excites admiration.

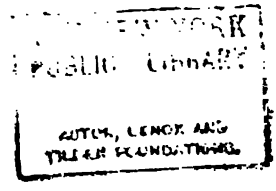
Some of the Indian maids are handsome. Yet you can tell just what their future lives will be by observing those of the parents. They will live in the same squalor, the same poverty as their ancestors have dwelt for centuries. They will go through life bareheaded and barefooted and empty-minded just

as the generations which preceded have done. At twenty they have begun to fade and at thirty they retain scarcely a trace of their beauty. This is due to hard labour and deprivations. At fourteen few are unmarried or at least unmated. The marriage ceremony is frequently omitted because of the high charges of the priesthood, yet both parties are usually faithful. The number of children among this class is truly marvellous. More than one half of the younger women when seen on the street have infant children with them.

No people could be more poorly housed or more poorly equipped for domestic duties than these small brown women; and none use the little they have to better advantage or are more loyal to the man they call lord and master. They frequently live and sleep on the bare ground and possess no more clothing than they have on their bodies. They will pound away at the *metate,* or stone kneading-board, all day making the *tortillas* which are both bread and meat to the peon class. These comely Indian women will bend their lithe, active bodies for hours washing clothes on large round stones which serve as wash-boards.

Their clothes are simple and the latest fashion has no attraction. The *rebosa* is a uni-

"THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN AMONG THIS CLASS IS TRULY MARVELLOUS"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versal garment and answers for a shawl, a carry-all for babies and bundles, and a covering for the owner at night. These black-eyed women with their half-concealed faces, sober, unemotional manners, high-coloured garments and curious Egyptian-shaped pottery might well be from the shores of the Red Sea. Their love of warm, bright colours is even seen in their love for flowers since the many-hued, brilliant-coloured blossoms are everywhere. Mignonettes and roses, flowering geraniums and scarlet poppies, gigantic oleanders and dainty pansies share attention with the brilliant-hued tropical birds in gayest colours which usually hang beside the open door in a home-made cage of dried rushes. They are faithful workers in fancy work and will follow the most intricate design and reproduce it with fidelity and ease. Their art needle work on handkerchiefs and other linen articles is extremely fine and their drawn work is praised everywhere. It is not the work of the dainty fingers of educated women but of very humble and ignorant peon women in floorless cabins of adobe and of hands accustomed to drudgery.

The women of Tehuantepec are remarkable for their beauty of face and form. They are easily the finest looking Indian women in

America and in beauty of figure will compare with any race in the world. They are dark-skinned, almost a soft olive-brown, with sparkling dark eyes, masses of wavy hair, exquisite features and beautiful teeth, which are kept clean and white. Their carriage will attract attention, for they walk erect and with a peculiar stride probably due to the prevailing habit of carrying baskets and water jars always on the head, where they are carefully balanced. They are small in stature, with fine limbs, and seem born models for an artist.

The " Tehuanas " wear a quaint head-dress called " huepil," which is made of coarse white lace. It is arranged in three different ways according to the occasion. At a dance it is wound round the neck and stands out like a huge Elizabethan ruff. In church it is put on the head something like a Boulogne fish-wife's cap. For ordinary wear it is simply laid back on the hair and the folds hang down the back resembling somewhat the feather head-dress of a North American Indian chief. It is indeed curious but is quite befitting. They always dress becomingly, with the quaint little short jackets which expose a section of brown back above the skirt band and are cut low about the neck in a fashion that women the world

over have found graceful, and with extremely short sleeves. On extraordinary occasions this short jacket, or waist, is of richer material embroidered in handsome designs of brilliant colours. Some of the designs show oriental characteristics. The skirt of the dress is of soft material, linen or cotton, to the knees and below the knees is of a heavy lace or embroidery starched very stiff. The material used is not the usual cheap and gaudy fabrics sold to the Mexican Indian, but is of good quality and specially made by a certain Manchester house for these people.

These belles of Tehuantepec have a great liking for American gold coins which are worn on necklaces. British sovereigns or French napoleons are usually not desired, but a big premium will be paid for the eagle, half eagle, or double eagles of Uncle Sam. Every centavo that a woman can save goes into her fund for purchasing gold pieces. The gorgeous necklace with the gold coins attached makes a showy and rather beautiful ornament. The fortune and standing of a " Tehuana " is indicated by the number of gold coins on her necklace. One Tehuantepec heiress has — it is said — a necklace which is valued at three thousand dollars. The most striking feature in the dress of these

women is that not one will wear shoes. Dressed in all her finery, head-dress, starched skirt, polka-dot waist, necklace and smile, she will appear barefooted — a strange anomaly. Without shoes they will dance over a stone floor, or even a dirt, gravel-bestrewn surface, with a grace that violates all rules of art. These dusky princesses will be found as graceful as gazelles on all occasions.

A visit to Tehuantepec will long be remembered for it is an experience not easily forgotten. The quaint costumes, the striking dress, and the proud people combine to make a memory worth carrying away.

CHAPTER X

THE PEON

"And I have said, and I say it ever,
As the years go on and the world goes over,
'Twere better to be content and clever
In tending of cattle and tossing of clover,
In the grazing of cattle and growing of grain,
Than a strong man striving for fame or gain;
. . . . . .
For these have the sun, and moon, and air,
And never a bit of the burthen of care;
And with all our caring what more have we?"

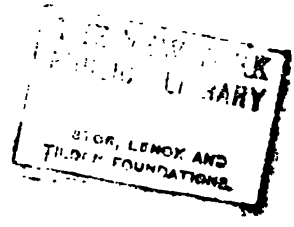
The distinction between the American and Mexican Indian is not one of colour alone. There is also a difference in nature. The American Indian has never been fully subdued, but the Aztecs were conquered by one overwhelming blow and their spirit crushed. The conquest wrought vast changes in the lives of these people who once roamed over large estates which they could call their own. The lands then tilled by their slaves, they themselves now cultivate for others. Yet they are a satisfied people, and no one ever hears them

complain. Though poverty is their lot they are content, believing that some people are born rich and others poor, and that this contrast is in the very nature of things.

Centuries of neglect have not improved either the moral or physical condition of the peon, but it has not made a misanthrope of him. Neither has the fact that he bears no part in the government made him an anarchist or filled his pockets with bombs. So long as a beneficent providence provides present needs he is supremely content. The mania for the almighty dollar has not yet entered into his life so that envy of others does not exist. It is this envy that makes poverty a menace and element of danger in our own land. The peon neither feels shame for his own lowly condition nor desires pity from others in more prosperous circumstances.

Fully one-third of the population of Mexico are full-blooded Indians and another one-half are *mestizos,* those of mixed blood. Many of the latter and a number of pure-blooded Indians have reached high positions. A number of the presidents also, including Guerrero and the noble Juarez, were pure Indians, and more of them are representatives of the *mestizos.* This is proof that there is no prejudice against the

A PEON AND HIS WIFE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Indians as a race such as the anti-negro sentiment in the Southern States. These illustrious examples are, however, the striking exceptions. Most of them are in about the same category as the southern negroes, — a race without ambition. Content to be the servants of another race they neither court nor welcome change.

These people make up the great peon class of Mexico who constitute the bulk of the population. They are the descendants of those who were enslaved by the early conquerors. The Aztecs were an industrious people as the great structures erected by them, the irrigating works still in use, and the evidences of judicious and careful cultivation of every foot of tillable soil bear mute witness. Poverty was almost unknown among them and rigid laws existed against begging. Among some of the early tribes of Mexico one-third of the land was divided equally among the able-bodied men in proportion to the families they had to sustain. Provision was made by the State for the sick and other classes of unfortunates. No doubt the enslaving of these people had a weakening effect upon their character.

A natural laziness, ignorance and a lack of interest will probably always keep down the

peon's efficiency as a worker. The few and simple wants of his nature and his general contentment eliminate to a great extent the desire to improve his condition and accumulate property. Then, too, the evenness of the climate and the fact that at all times some crop is being harvested, thus making it unnecessary to lay up for an unproductive season, has had its influence. The labourer is usually given a certain task for his day's work. Nothing can induce him to do more than that task except the assurance that the excess, or over-time, will be credited to some future day so that he will get a longer holiday. These labourers are cheap and it requires many of them to accomplish much but there are millions to be had. They are happy-go-lucky and are unconcerned for the future. Yet the very fact that they do not possess self-control and are always willing to follow a leader who understands how to make an appeal to their prejudices or fanaticism, renders this class a serious obstacle to a progressive government and one that must be intelligently studied.

The little brown man in the tall, broad-brimmed hat which seems to give an unusual height to his sturdy frame is a picturesque figure and the landscape is not complete with-

A GROUP OF PEONS

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out him. In the presence of strangers his face is solemn, but among others of his own kind he is gay and light-hearted, his face easily bursting into smiles. He will wrap his tattered shawl about him with as much dignity as the Spanish cavalier his richly-embroidered *manta*. The act of lighting a cigarette is a matter of studied ceremony. He will light a match, and first offer it to a friend with punctilious politeness. The recipient of the favour never fails to return *muchas gracias* (many thanks), señor. In fact, this elaborate politeness between these untidy, ill-clad Indians becomes a farce-comedy at times. He is polite and never fails to say *con permiso* (with your permission) if he is obliged to pass by another person, whether that person be in silks or rags. His own inferiority is admitted by calling a white man a *gente de razon* or "one who reasons," as distinguished from himself, — a peon.

The peon is indispensable in Mexico for he is not only the labourer, but the body servant as well. In the latter capacity, if he becomes attached to his employer, he will not think of his own wants until the master is provided for, and will be faithful unto death, if necessary. His wages are always small, but he is satisfied with the little he gets. Gambling is a natural

trait and he loses or gains with a stoicism worthy of greater things. His money is likewise spent freely at the pulque shop so that his finances are never embarrassed by a surplus. A little money will make him very full of liquor, and a little liquor will sometimes make him a bad man to handle.

The tenacity with which these people cling to an environment is a most notable trait. The peon is a lover of locality. Seldom can these Indians be induced to go away from their accustomed habitations. It is this trait that has made peonage an easy system to maintain in Mexico. They do not apply much intelligence to their work. Scratching the surface of the soil with a crooked stick is the perfection of ploughing in their estimation. The peon does not know and does not care to learn any different way of doing his work than the one taught him by his fathers. The possibility of earning more money by the use of labour-saving devices does not possess the same attraction as for the American labouring man.

Peonage, which is a mild form of slavery, is in force in Mexico. Earning from eighteen to fifty cents (silver) wages per day and improvident by nature, it is only natural for the peon to want at some time a little more money

than that earned. An unscrupulous employer can easily involve the poor, ignorant Indian in a net of debt. After a while a debt of $50 to $100 has accumulated and the worker is in bondage until this amount is paid. It is an impossible sum for him to save out of his small wages, for live he must and support a family, which is usually large. The price of freedom is the total amount of the debt. Until that is paid the law compels him to work for his creditor, but he is free to get some one else to advance this money and change masters. He cannot be separated from his family, nor compelled to leave the plantation on which the debt was incurred without his consent. The owner may, however, sell the plantation and transfer the debt to his successor, and the peon must serve the new master under the same conditions.

On the immense *haciendas* of the uplands the peons are almost as much of a fixture as the buildings themselves. It is a strange adaptation of the old feudal relation and the idea of changing their abode never occurs to them. They were born in debt, always remain in that condition, and transmit the same burden to their posterity. This condition is usually entered into voluntarily by the Indians, so that

in the beginning he has only himself to blame. An Indian who desires work will apply to the manager of a plantation or ranch for a retainer which seldom exceeds thirty dollars. He then signs a contract which binds himself, his family and his posterity to work until this advance is liquidated. Only a small part of the weekly wages may be applied on the debt, and it is tacitly understood that the debt may be increased after a time. The employer is obliged to furnish medical assistance free in case of sickness, and to advance the necessary fees for marriage, baptisms, confirmations and burials. Furthermore, whenever overtaken by old age and no longer able to work, the peon must be taken care of and furnished the necessities of life.

Holidays, feast-days and saint-days are many, and the peon insists on celebrating them all. Whether he understands much of the ritual and doctrines of the Catholic Church or not, he understands full well the meaning of a feast-day or "*fiesta*" for on that day he rests from his labours. It would not be patriotic to work on a national holiday (and they are numerous) so he abstains from labour on these occasions. Sundays are rest days and it generally requires Monday to recuperate from the

effects of the *pulque* or *tequila* imbibed on that day. Then as each person has a patron saint, he insists on celebrating the saint-days of the master, mistress and each one of their family, of his own family, his father, mother, his wife's father and mother, and, last, but not least, his own saint-day. Then each marriage, birth or death in the family gives occasion for another off-day. After this list is gone through with there remains only about two hundred working days for the average labourer. The peon is a philosopher. Knowing that it was a curse that man should earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, he tries to avoid as much of the curse as possible.

The system of peonage or contract labour in the tropics is revolting and often inhuman. The peon of the hot country is more independent, is fond of social life and is not so industrious as his brother in the uplands. Hence it becomes necessary to transport hundreds of labourers for work on tropical plantations. These are secured through contract agents who make this work a business. These agents pick them up over the country and deliver them in hundred lots to the plantation managers. The contractor advances from thirty to fifty dollars in silver to each labourer,

and this amount together with his own fee, is then charged up against the peon who has contracted to work six months at perhaps fifty cents per day in the same white metal. The plantation manager binds himself to furnish rations, which usually consist of little more than *tortillas* (unleavened corn cakes), beans and rice and a little meat for Sunday, and a big palm hut will furnish accommodation for fifty or more men. But little space is allowed each worker, and here he spends all his time when not at work, for these contract men are, on many plantations, kept under guard night and day by armed overseers. Many of these poor fellows come from cities on the plateaus and soon fall a victim to tropical fevers. Many are men who have been convicted of petty offences and sign a labour contract in return for the payment of their fines by the contractor's agent and consequent release from confinement. All, however, are treated alike on the plantations and are worked under the lash if necessary. At the end of the six months, there are not many dollars due the poor peon after deducting the price of the drinks and cigarettes which he has purchased at the company's store. After drawing his money he is likely to make for the first town and drink or gamble

it away. Then, not having funds enough to get home, he is again at the mercy of the contract agent or plantation owner.

The little brown man with back bent under a load has a countenance which is as full of rest and patient philosophy as a modern financier's face is of care and wrinkles of anxiety. It is almost unfair to the simple-minded, patient and docile peon of Mexico to speak of him as an Indian for he is at once confused with the bloodthirsty redskin of the north. He is a peaceful, if improvident, character, and is a child in nature. He represents cheap labour and is one of the great attractions that brings wealth to Mexico. After a day's work he is content to share his little adobe hut with the pigs and chickens, and can even find room for the chance wayfarer. A family of three or four generations, and numbering twenty people, will live in a hut that would not be considered a fit habitation for a donkey in the north. One American writer who was obliged to seek shelter in one of these huts gives an amusing account of his experience which shows the harmony and good-fellowship that exists in these households between the human and brute members. "I took an account of the stock before I turned in, and found there were three

dogs, eleven cats, seven children, five men (not including five of us), three women and a dozen chickens, all sleeping, or trying to sleep, in the same room, under the one roof. And when I gave up sleeping, or trying to sleep, and wandered out into the night, I stepped on the pigs and startled three or four calves that had been sleeping under the porch." So it is not surprising that a village of fifty huts may contain a thousand souls.

A cigarette given in proper spirit every day will more effectually keep his friendship than a present of a new suit of clothes. The latter will not be remembered long while the former keeps the memory ever fresh. They have been called the best and the poorest servants in the world. A trusted servant is, however, usually an honest one. These wholly satisfied people with whom our essentials are non-essentials rather disprove the theory that modern civilization is necessary to true happiness. Will the peon in the future wearing shoes, eating prepared breakfast foods and sleeping in a bed, be any happier than he is now barefooted and sleeping on a rush mat spread on an earthen floor?

A constantly increasing number of the peon class are moving to the industrial centres.

Slowly but surely the leaven is working, and the opportunity for better wages is withdrawing the labourers from the plantations. The railroads, the mines and the factories are paying much higher wages than formerly prevailed, and find it difficult to secure sufficient labourers. Only the selected men can fill these positions for the average peon has not sufficient intelligence. He has a great imitative faculty and can learn a task, but is not a success in an employment that needs the exercise of reason and judgment. In many lines of work more is accomplished at less expense by peons with the rudest methods than by the use of the latest labour-saving machinery operated by peon labourers. Education will no doubt work great changes in the lives and habits of these people, but this will be a slow process in this land of "to-morrow." The present conditions are interesting to one who desires to see how the rest of the world lives, and it will be a long time before the peon class will change very materially.

There is one class of the Indian worker that deserves more extended mention. This is that time-honoured institution called the cargador. As you meet him at every place throughout Spanish North America it may be interesting

to the reader to learn something of his history and his accomplishments. It is not necessary to institute a search for the cargador. At the station you will be besieged by a small army of them and the hotel entrance may be blocked by them. When travelling across the country there is a never-ending succession of these picturesque characters singly and in groups. Sometimes the entire family is along. In such cases the boys, even down to little tots, carry a small package on their backs and the wife and girls balance a basket on their heads. Perhaps all their earthly belongings are contained in these various bundles.

The cargador of Mexico and Central America claims an ancient and honourable lineage. His occupation may be a humble one, but he can trace his ancestry back to the followers of that haughty Aztec emperor, Montezuma, or even to the still older race of the Toltecs. Not many years ago almost everything in these countries was carried on the backs of cargadors. Even now in the City of Mexico the cargador is an indispensable factor in the carrying trade, though there are many express and transfer companies engaged in that business. In the smaller places of Mexico, in the mountain districts, and in Central America he holds

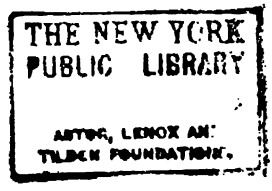
his old-time prestige and, with the cargo mule, monopolizes the carrying business.

The strength of these little, brown-skinned cargadors is wonderful. Short in stature and with thin legs and arms they look very insignificant. They cannot lift a very heavy weight, but they can make their fairer-skinned brother cry out in astonishment at the load they will carry when it is once adjusted on their back. The average load for a cargo mule is one hundred and fifty pounds. A cargador will start on a journey of two hundred or more miles with such a load and will cover more miles in a day over a rough mountain trail than a mule. At the station you will see the little cargador pick up a heavy trunk that you can scarcely move and start off with it at a faster pace than you care to walk. They always move in a peculiar jog-trot, and can usually keep it up for a long time. Up and down hill they go at an even pace, and will average about six miles per hour. For short distances some cargadors will carry as great a load as five hundred pounds, a seemingly impossible burden for so slender a body.

The strength in the back is a matter of training extending over many centuries. The Aztecs had no beasts of burden and the baggage

of their armies was always carried by cargadors. The Spanish conquerors were obliged to adopt the same methods. Now, although there are mules and burros in great numbers, the cargador is still the great burden bearer and takes the place of the fast freight in the commerce of those sections away from the railway lines. A traveller can take his mule and send his baggage by a cargador, and the latter will reach the same stopping place each night and sometimes ahead of the man on the mule. Many cargadors carry their loads in a frame, supported by a broad leather band across the forehead. When thus loaded they cannot turn their heads and they do not seem to hear well, so that I have feared many times they would be run over by the careless drivers. If there are several together they trot along in the middle of the road in Indian file. If going on a long journey they carry along enough tortillas for the entire trip, and must always be given enough time to make these preparations. Several times a day they will stop and make a fire, prepare their coffee, and eat their tortillas and fruit if it can be obtained. At night they will sleep out in the open air under a porch, if possible; if this shelter cannot be had, then they

A CARGADOR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will lay themselves down to rest under the brilliant starlit canopy of this tropical clime.

Many of the Indians are very swift runners. An instance is told in Guatemala of a runner who carried a dispatch one hundred and five miles into the interior and returned with an answer in thirty-six hours, making the trip over mountains and a rough trail at an average speed of six miles an hour, including stops and delays. It is said that fish caught at Vera Cruz in the evening were served at the dinner table of Montezuma the following day at his capital near the site of the present City of Mexico, a distance of nearly three hundred miles by road. This was done by a system of relay runners stationed about a mile apart, and they made almost as fast time as the railway train to-day. Whether this is true or not it is well known that the Aztecs had a wonderful system of communication. The Spaniards were frequently astonished at the rapidity with which the news of their movements was spread. These runners were trained to great speed and endurance from their youth. Hundreds of them were in constant use, and the Aztec emperors were kept in communication with all parts of their empire. The Aztecs also used these runners as spies and they thus took the

place of scouting parties in present-day campaigns.

So it is that these cargadors come and go. Each generation is like the last. They are happy in that they want but little and that little is easily supplied. They are contented because they live for to-day and worry not for the morrow. They are satisfied to go through life as the bearers of other people's burdens.

CHAPTER XI

CUSTOMS AND CHARACTERISTICS

"A land of lutes and witching tones,
Of silver, onyx, opal stones;
A lazy land, wherein all seems
Enchanted into endless dreams;
And never any need they know,
In Mexico,

"Of life's unquiet, swift advance,
But slipped into such gracious trance,
The restless world speeds on, unfelt,
Unheeded, as by those who dwelt
In golden ages, long ago,
In Mexico."

— EVALEEN STEIN.

IT is always interesting to know how the rest of the world lives, but an experience with the customs and characteristics of a people impresses travellers in widely different ways. Mexico is a land of strange customs and strong characteristics which are deeply interesting to the sympathetic tourist. "Oh! the charm of the semi-tropical Spanish life!" says F. Hopkinson Smith. "The balconies above the

patios trellised with flowers; the swinging hammocks, the slow plash of the fountains; the odour of jasmine wet with dew; the low thrum of guitar and the soft moonlight half-revealing the muffled figures in lace and cloak. It is the same old story, and yet it seems to me it is told in Spanish lands more delightfully and with more romance, colour and mystery than elsewhere on the globe." On the other hand many matter-of-fact, unsympathetic travellers see only the impractical ways, annoyances and inconvenient customs like the writer who describes Mexico as " A land of lace and lice and love, of flowers and fights and fleas; of babies and bull-fights where pillow slips are open at both ends and where passengers get off the front end of the street-cars; where keys often six inches in length are fitted in keyholes turned upside down and invariably turned backward; where the weather forgets to change from day to day and people sleep under the same bed cover the year around."

The Mexican has learned the secret of daily contentment. This is true generally of the creole class as well as of the peon. The fact that some seven thousand families practically own the entire landed estate of the country does not inspire envy in the bosoms of the other

millions. It is a question whether the Anglo-Saxon and the Teuton can give these people more than mere mechanical contrivances. Home does not necessarily consist in an open fire, drawn curtains and frequent visits of curious neighbours. Here homes are found where privacy is respected, family affection is strong and there is respect for elders, love for parents and kindly relations between masters and servants. Such a country is not uncivilized and barbarous. There may be many odd and nonsensical customs but a reason can generally be found for them. When studying the natives it is enough to know that they are " an unselfish, patient, tender-hearted people; a people maintaining in their every-day life an etiquette phenomenal in a down-trodden race; offering instantly to the stranger and wayfarer on the very threshold of their adobe huts a hospitality so generous, accompanied by a courtesy so exquisite, that one stops at the next doorway to re-enjoy the luxury."

If one has absolutely nothing to do or suffers from the constitutional ailment of having been born tired, Mexico is the place for him to rest. Nor will he be lonesome in the occupation of loafing for on every bench is a wayfarer for company. There is no Mexicanism

more pronounced than that of procrastination. Never do to-day what can be put off until to-morrow is the revised motto. Nothing is so important that it cannot wait until *mañana* (to-morrow). An American, whom I met in Mexico, and who had lived there a number of years characterized the country as the land of *mañana, esperase* and *poco tiempo,* or the land of "to-morrow" and "wait-a-while." Time is idled away. Nobody expects you to be punctual and you are not censured should you fail to keep an engagement. In fact, "you will probably be designated as a bore should you insist on scrupulously and punctually keeping all your appointments, for the man who always meets you on the dot is a nuisance in this southern land. If you have an appointment with a Mexican at noon, go at four o'clock in the afternoon and you will probably find him waiting for you. Had you gone on time, he might have been absent. Never be in a hurry, for constant hustle and bustle are the unpardonable sins. Respect the native customs and doze or read for a couple of hours after lunch and get busy as the sun nears the horizon." The Mexican pays a compliment to Anglo-Saxon push by adding *a la Inglesa* to an appointment which is intended to be kept punctually

or "after the English fashion." It is impossible to educate the Mexican to American methods, so it behooves the foreigner who goes to Mexico to make up his mind to do business after the standards of that country. However lax or disappointing they may be he must remember that in Mexico his methods are the strange ones and not theirs, which are centuries old. In society calls lengthen to visits and last hours and the hurried five-minute calls are happily unknown. The longer the stay, the greater the compliment for it means that the visitor is enjoying herself.

In a country where, until recently, the purchase of a foreign draft was an all-day operation one cannot expect to do business in a very strenuous way. The people have breathed the somnolent atmosphere so long that they cannot be hurried. In fact, in some of the towns, the buzzards that encircle the town seem to be the only living creatures actually looking for something to do, for even the dogs would sneak down the alley to avoid trouble. And yet in the face of all this the Yankee drummer arrives in a town and scarcely takes time to brush the dust of travel from his clothes before he starts out to visit his prospective customers. He expects to round up his orders and take the train

on the following morning for the next town. After running against a few *mañanas* from day to day without an opportunity to show his goods he feels about as disgusted as the enterprising American who, intending to revolutionize agriculture, took down a large stock of the latest American farming implements, but after a year's effort had made no sale. The salesman who will succeed is not the one who tries to introduce the hurry-up methods of his own land, but the one who adapts himself to the country and does not attempt to rush things. It will require days and perhaps weeks to work a large city.

I met an Englishman in one of these large Spanish-American towns who was a fair example of the successful European drummer. He had made this route for years and was thoroughly conversant with the language and understood the ways of the people. His methods were a good illustration of the reason why English and German houses have for many decades controlled trade in Spanish America. They keep their old men on the route as long as possible, for a new man will not do much on his first trip. We stopped at the same hotel and I had a good opportunity of observing his business methods. For several days

after arriving in the town he did nothing but make social calls on his customers, take them to the theatre and entertain them in a general way. During the next few days he invited them to his rooms to inspect his stock which was large and varied. Then he began to take orders. This method seems like a waste of time but the orders secured were large and well repaid for the time taken. The American drummer could not have controlled his impatience to be on the move and would have made a failure. Many who drop into Mexico on a flying trip, jump to the conclusion that the Mexican merchant is not so shrewd a business man as the American. They are apt to mistake the deliberate methods of the Latin race for poor methods. He consumes more time in placing his order and there is less rush and bustle about his store, but an experienced man will tell you that in the end he drives a pretty hard bargain for he knows the market price of the goods and wants the best discounts and longest credit.

Even the legal customs are peculiar and have proven decidedly embarrassing to many Americans. A number of years ago, before railroads were so numerous, the local officers always arrested the engineer and conductor in

the event that any one was killed, and they were thrust into jail "incommunicado." This means that you are to be incarcerated seventy-two hours in solitary confinement without bail, at the end of which time a judicial examination is given. An American whom I met there told me of his "incommunicado" experience. He was arrested because he had witnessed an affray and was held as witness, in solitary confinement, but was released by the official after the judicious use of thirty dollars. Their theory is that after a man has been kept in confinement for three days, with only his own thoughts for company, he is much more likely to tell the truth than if he had been in communication with his lawyers, friends and the reporters all that time. And who can deny the truth of their claim?

It is always best to keep out of the neighbourhood of trouble, or get out of it as quickly as you can if it comes your way, especially if in the remote districts, for offender and victim are both liable to arrest and imprisonment. Most cases are put off from day to day until one party or the other is weary of the proceeding. An instance which illustrates this was related to me by a man who was arrested for misdemeanour. Knowing the custom prevalent

in the courts he hired an attorney to appear each day for him. When the case was called the judge would ask "*Que quiere*" (what do you want). After the case was explained he would dispose of it with the simple word *mañana*. The other man appeared each day until disgusted with the procedure and then dropped the matter. Lawyers charge so much per word and are paid for each article as it is written. Mexican notaries are very important personages. They take the place to a great degree of the old-fashioned, family lawyer. They are regarded in much the same light as the family confessor and are told the family secrets. To their credit, be it said, that the notary is usually a man worthy of the confidence placed in him.

The ceremonial and punctilious politeness of the Mexican, be he Don or peon, is interesting and oftentimes amusing. The Spaniard on meeting a friend on the street will stop and inquire one by one after the health of his wife, each of his children and the various other members of his household and then in turn will submit to the same interrogations from his friend. After witnessing such a scene between two men in silk hats you can turn down a side street and see a meeting between a poor Indian in rags

and an old withered woman selling lottery tickets. Removing his tattered *sombrero* he bows gravely, and, in the softest of Spanish, says, "*A los pies de usted, señora*" (at your feet, lady). This is done with a grace and ease of manner worthy of any station in life; and her answer "My hands are for your kisses, señor," is said in the same gracious way worthy of a duchess. Should you ask the man for his name he would be sure to add "*Su criado de usted*" (your servant).

The Mexicans are very proud and exclusive, and suspicious of the newcomer. Seldom indeed is it that an American gains the *entree* into their homes but, if he succeeds, they will be found among the most charming hosts in the world. This reserve is probably very natural. The Mexican has been educated in the strict Catholic schools and is a victim of custom old as his country, while the American coming to Mexico is a mercenary, ambitious person engaged in commercial strife and in the race for the almighty dollar. Then, the American is of a more matter-of-fact temperament and does not appreciate the impulsive nature of the Mexican. Money does not appeal to him except for the pleasure of spending it, and no person is more lavish in the expenditure of

money, if he has it, than a Mexican gentleman.

The Mexican is a home lover and yet there is no word in the Spanish language that corresponds to our word for home. *Casa*, or house, is the nearest to it and the Mexican always speaks of his house when he means his home. The exaggerated conventionalities are often carried to the verge of the absurd. Perhaps there may be as much truth in their expressions as in the polite but oftentimes meaningless civilities of our own land. An American, on being introduced to a stranger, will feel that he has satisfied the etiquette of the occasion by simply expressing his pleasure in the acquaintance. The Mexican goes a step further and presents the newly-made acquaintance with his house.

"*Su casa es numero* ——," he says with a graceful bow giving the street and number of his own house, which literally means "your house is number ——," and usually adds, "It is entirely at your disposal; make yourself at home." It is simply a polite way of saying "I am glad to meet you." Perhaps five minutes later the incident is forgotten by the giver. One writer has said that he met fourteen men at a club in Mexico and was presented with

thirteen houses. The fourteenth man was unmarried and not a householder. Occasionally some one not familiar with the emptiness of the phrase has presumed on its literal interpretation and called at one of the houses presented to him but has been turned away without the least sign of recognition.

If one expresses admiration for some article worn by another, he is quickly informed that the article is "at his disposal." If you happen upon a Mexican at the dining hour, he will probably offer you his dinner. If you decline it, the occasion requires that you should do so with polite wishes for his digestion. These forms of hospitality are derived from Spanish ancestors and were by them probably copied from the Moors, after the open hand and open tent customs of the sons of the desert who meant these expressions literally. It has an empty meaning now, for nothing is left but the words. With all this seeming inconsistency and insincerity, the Mexicans are exceedingly kind hearted and will willingly do favours if approached in the right way; no service is too great towards those for whom they have formed an attachment. They will often accompany the departing guest for a long distance

over hard roads as a mark of courtesy and friendship.

We are all victims of habit more or less. But, whereas the American welcomes innovations and adapts his habits to them, or forms new ones, the Mexican does not want any change from the customs of his ancestors. The expression "*no es costumbre,*" meaning it is not the custom, is a final and decisive answer that does not admit of argument. You might as well try to change the colour of the native as his habits. Americans who keep Mexican servants are for ever running contrary to the customs or prejudices of their help. For instance an American woman[1] who lived here a number of years relates the trouble she had to induce her servant to use a cook stove which she had imported from the United States. She refused because "it would give her disease of the liver." In all seriousness she believed that such would be the result and nothing could induce her to have anything to do with the new-fangled thing. A peripatetic merchant came around selling eggs at six for a real. He refused to sell two dozen for four reals because "*no es costumbre,*" as eggs are always sold at six for a real, an incontrovertible argument.

[1] Mrs. Gooch in "Face to Face with the Mexicans."

A household will have difficulty in getting along with only one servant for it is customary to employ three or four in a small family and from twenty to forty in a large house. Each servant will do his or her own particular work cheerfully and will move about so lightly and airily that you hardly know any one is around. However, ask the man *mozo* to scrub the floor, or the cook to make the beds, and you will see a regretful look of the eye and be met with the ready answer, "*no es costumbre.*" Marketing is a right jealously guarded too, for *es costumbre* (it is the custom) and one of the perquisites of the man servant, since he receives a small fee from each person of whom purchases are made. The Indian servants are not accustomed to beds and want nothing but a mat to sleep upon. The traveller can see these in the halls at the hotel if he comes in a little late. Here these dusky natives sleep more soundly than do most Americans on the most luxurious of beds. An American lady in Oaxaca took pity on her girl servant and bought a comfortable iron bed for her to occupy. She then explained to her how the bed was used. Several days later she asked the servant how she liked her bed. The girl said it was fine — to lay her clothes on. The

MAKING *TORTILLAS*

American woman finally gave up trying to change the habits of her maid. Servants become very devoted to their employers and their attachment is sometimes embarrassing. In case of a death in the family they immediately don black and mourn as though the lost one was a near relative of their own.

The economy of housekeeping and especially of the kitchen, even among the rich, is remarkable. The Indian or *Mestiza* women rule here and the customs of a thousand years ago are the customs of to-day. The *tortillas,* cakes made of maize, are the bread of the country. For centuries these dusky women of Mexico have ground the corn for their daily bread between two stones, the grains having first been soaked for several hours in a solution of lime water. This smoothed, dished-out stone is called a *metate,* an Aztec word, and the women work for hours in beating the softened grains to a fine paste. Small pieces of the dough are then worked between the hands, tossed and patted, and flattened out until very thin. After this they are thrown upon a flat, iron griddle over a charcoal fire. They are never allowed to brown and are without salt or seasoning of any kind. After becoming used to them they

prove very palatable and many prefer them to the ordinary corn bread.

Frijoles, or beans, and generally black ones, are also invariably served and are eaten twice every day without intermission on the table of rich or poor. The *chili,* a pretty hot sort of pepper, is a favourite dish that had better be avoided by the Americans, for the ability to relish it can only be approached by degrees. *Tamales* are relished by the Mexican and can be found for sale in almost any of the markets. I never see *tamales* without thinking of the description given of them by a big Texan in his bread dialect, in answer to a question from me as the train was speeding across the mesquit prairies near San Antonio. "You take cawn meal, some hawt (heart), livah and a little pep-pah and you make a tamahle, suh."

The use of sacred names or names of great personages among these people is often astonishing. The names of Porfirio Diaz, Juarez and Hidalgo are as numerous as the George Washingtons among the negroes of the south. However, when the American stumbles upon a Pius Fifth, St. John the Evangelist or even Jesus, in a dirty-face brown man clothed in rags, it seems a strange incongruity. Talk with this humble bearer of a sacred name or

offer him a gratuity, and, as you depart, he will say, "*Vaya usted con Dios*" (go, and God be with you), in such a simple and benign manner that you almost feel as though a benediction were following you.

We are told by the early writers that the Aztecs had few stores, but that nearly all the trading was done in the markets which were found in every city, or by the great merchant princes who traversed the country with their large army of burden-bearers and retainers, compelling trade as well as seeking it. It is interesting to note the description of the market in the capital in the time of Cortez written by Bernal Diaz, one of his followers, and the historian of his expedition. He expresses his astonishment at the great crowds of people, the regularity which prevailed and the vast quantities of merchandise on display. "The articles consisted of gold, silver, jewels, feathers, mantles, chocolate, skins dressed and undressed, sandals, and great numbers of male and female slaves, some of whom were fastened by the neck, in collars, to long poles. The meat market was stocked with fowls, game and dogs. Vegetables, fruits, articles of food ready dressed, salt, bread, honey and sweet pastry made in various ways, were also sold here.

Other places in the square were appointed to the sale of earthen ware, wooden household furniture such as tables and benches, firewood, pipes, sweet canes filled with tobacco mixed with liquidamber, copper axes and working tools, and wooden vessels highly painted. Numbers of women sold fish and little loaves made of a certain mud which they find in the lakes, and which resembles cheese. The entire square was enclosed in piazzas under which great quantities of grain were stored and where were also shops for various kinds of goods."

This description would answer very well to-day except as to slaves and feathers. It is to be regretted that the beautiful feather work of that race is a lost art. The market of the capital is located but a short distance from the plaza and is an excellent place to study life. The outer portion is occupied by small shops covered with protecting piazzas but the central part is wholly occupied by the Indian merchants. During the morning hours it is so closely packed that it is almost impossible to force one's way through the dense throng of humanity. The native, squatted on the ground on a rush mat, with another mat suspended over him for protection from the fierce sun, and his stock in trade spread before him, is a pic-

A MEXICAN MARKET

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ture worth studying. Many tribes are represented, as their dress indicates, as well as the products of many different zones from the cocoanut of the hot lands to the inferior pears of the cold zone. The pottery from Guadalajara can be distinguished from that of Guadalupe or Aguas Calientes by its colour and design. Each piece might tell a history of an art passed down from father to son for countless generations, for the son usually follows the occupation of his father. They never think of changing method of manufacture or design. It is quite probable that the pottery seen in the market to-day is the same as that viewed by Cortez. Many of the vessels are curious and fantastic in form but always ornamental in decoration. When one considers that much of this pottery is made with no tools but pieces of broken glass and a horsehair, the result is a marvel. With the hair they trim the top and with the glass smooth off the rough places. The pottery market is an important one, for articles used in the kitchen and on the tables of the poorer classes are exclusively of this ware. For a small sum an entire kitchen outfit can be purchased.

There are few Jewish merchants in Mexico for the Mexican is even more persuasive in

his mode of selling and his prices are fully as elastic. In purchasing native articles on different occasions I tried several dealers in order to discover whether they had a uniform bottom price. They would invariably ask at least twice as much as they were willing to accept. I found that if one would only show surprise at the price asked, the question "What will you give" would immediately follow. They were perfectly willing to get as much from you as possible but the lowest price quoted by the various dealers was almost identical. Some persons have facetiously characterized Mexico as the land of "*no hay*" (pronounced eye) because it is such a common answer in marketing and means "there is none." In fact, the answer will always be "*no hay*" or "*si, hay*" (yes, I have).

There are many quaint and curious characters that one will find around the market place. The candy man, or, boy, moves around with noiseless tread crying his wares in a song which never varies any more than his stock, which is always the same and arranged in exactly the same way. His *dulces,* however, have merit and it is not necessary to change anything already good. The *evangelista,* or letter writer, is here with a jug of ink and pen on a

CANDY BOY AND GIRL

little table ready to write a business letter, or a *billet doux* flaming with passion and extravagant phrases for the unlettered lover. On the corners of the street may be seen the cobblers ready to cut and fit sandals " while you wait." His whole stock in trade consists of a pile of scraps of sole leather and some leather thongs, while his only tool is a curved, sharp knife.

In and out of the crowd the faithful *aguador,* or water-carrier, winds his way bringing the refreshing water to thirsty mortals. He is not only a very necessary person in this land of little rain, but is a person of importance and knows the inner life of the household of his customers. His costume and water vessels vary in the different cities but he is the same honest character who ingeniously carries the love messages from the " bear " to his inamorata. After a morning of hard work his faithful wife brings his dinner of *tortillas* and *frijoles* to the fountain or well, and there he sits and eats his humble meal while she watches her lord and master until he has finished. Later in the day, tiring of his work or feeling the burden of prosperity as his stock of copper coins increases, he resorts to the pulque-shop and there shows his contempt for the beverage

he has been distributing by imbibing large quantities of his favourite liquor.

Perhaps in no way is the general superstition and ignorance of the Indian shown to better advantage than in their ideas of disease and medicine. The *curandera,* usually a woman, admits having great knowledge of anatomy and chemistry, and has a pharmacopœia all her own. The accounts given here are vouched for by a writer in *Modern Mexico* who is a native of the country, understands these people and is entitled to belief. *Aire* (air), when introduced into the system through blows or unusually forcible sneezing, causes swellings, sore eyes and nervous tremblings. It is treated with plasters and bandages and lotions. When the alimentary canal is obstructed it is *empacho,* which means that undigested food has adhered to the stomach or the food has formed into balls and marbles that rattle around inside the stomach or intestines. This disease demands immediate and heroic treatment, and a drop of quicksilver swallowed at a gulp is prescribed and will generally dislodge it or kill the patient. *Tiricia* is indicated by homesickness, melancholia or insomnia, and is caused by a subtle vapour produced by the action of the moon on the dew

and is absorbed through the pores. Change of climate, good company and tonics are a sensible prescription. *Mal de ojo,* or the evil eye, causes the sufferer to fade away or die of inanition, and is a common disease of children. Bright attractive objects are hung up to draw away the attention of the "evil eye." If a child is slow in talking, a diet of boiled swallows is prescribed. One writer positively asserts that blue and red beads ground fine and mixed in equal portions have been given to persons suffering with paralysis, and the sufferers survived the treatment. The *curandera* is also called upon to mix love potions and poisons that will cause delirium or even insanity and death.

Another instance is told in the same periodical of a woman who was very sick with a disease from the effects of which she was practically helpless. A *curandera* had told the husband to get a white turkey and tie it in the house and his wife would get well. When the turkey had failed to cure her an old man *curandero* was procured, who promised to make her well if supplied with plenty of *aguardiente* (brandy). Four dollars worth was supplied him, and four dollars will buy a great deal of poor brandy in Mexico. The old man laid him-

self down on the ground, after filling himself up with the fire-water, pounded his head and kept repeating weird incantations which could be heard a long distance away. This was continued for several days until the supply of spirits gave out. In the meantime the patient had improved somewhat and could use her arms and body as far as the waist. The shrewd old man shrugged his shoulders and said, "I have cured her as far as I can. You will have to get a *curandera* to complete the cure." The poor woman soon died, because, as the husband declared, she had been bewitched.

CHAPTER XII

HOLIDAYS AND HOLY-DAYS

It is impossible to understand Mexico or the Mexicans without knowing something of their feasts and festivals which play such a large part in the life of these people. In fact there is very little of the social life in Mexico that is not the outgrowth of or intimately connected with the holy-days of the Church. The saint's day of each member, that is the day in the church calendar devoted to the saint after whom the person is named, takes the place of the birthday for gifts and family celebrations. The *fiestas,* or feast-days, of the church are very numerous and are pretty well observed, although business is not entirely suspended. The church holidays are either different from those in other Catholic countries or are observed in a truly national way in Mexico.

To one who enjoys mixing with the common people and learning their customs, habits and ways of thinking, in other words, endeavouring

to get into their real, inner life, it is a perpetual delight to visit the cities and villages on the *fiesta* occasions and mingle with the people in their celebration. This association with a free-hearted, pleasure-loving people on their gala days unconsciously broadens the views of a traveller in a new country, and develops a sympathy which can be awakened in no other way. The crowds jostle each other good naturedly and will treat the stranger with respect. Too many visitors to this country try to judge everything from the American standard and find little to commend. They should remember that Mexico is Oriental rather than Anglo-Saxon, and that the Spanish-Moorish civilization is here blended with the Aztec. Such a civilization cannot be without merit and it must have some inherent good qualities. If one wants to understand a country rightly, he must first try to enter into the lives of the people and then look at life from their point of view.

It would be impossible within the limits prescribed to describe all the celebrations in honour of the hundreds of saints and the numerous secular holidays. A description of a few of these occasions, most generally observed, will give the reader a good idea of the nature of all.

Christmas celebrations in Mexico are very much different from those in the United States. There is no merry jingle of the sleigh bells in this land of Christmas sunshine and skies as blue as those of Naples; and there are no plans dependent upon whether the day may chance to be white or green. The few lofty volcanic peaks, on which alone snow is ever seen, would not tempt the most enthusiastic tobogganist. As there are no chimneys, the children need not sit up at night until sleep overtakes them, to see Santa Claus descend with his heavy pack filled with the things that boys and girls like. Even the time honoured custom of hanging up stockings is unknown to Mexican children. Perhaps they enjoy themselves quite as much after their own fashion as we do after ours. They have good things to eat, and the beautiful flowers are so cheap that no matter how humble the Mexican home may be, it affords a few sprays of the scarlet *Noche Bueno,* the beautiful Christmas plant. Their celebrations are long continued for they begin nine days before Christmas and last until the Feast of the Epiphany on the 6th of January; and this entire time is one long delightful jubilee.

These celebrations, which begin on the sixteenth of December and continue until the

twenty-fifth, are called *posadas*. The word in Spanish means an "inn," or abiding place, and while the celebration, in its origin, was distinctly religious, it is now only semi-religious, and has become an extremely gay and sociable occasion. The *posadas* are limited to the cities but, in those places, the poorest as well as the richest families hold them and they are a celebration peculiar to this country.

The origin of the *posada* is in the gospel narrative of the Nativity. Because Cæsar had issued the decree that all the world should be taxed, Mary and Joseph came to Bethlehem to be enrolled. Mary made the journey mounted upon an ass which Joseph led. As the shadows of the night descended, they were obliged to ask for shelter, and it is no wonder that the request was not always granted readily and willingly, but was many times refused during the trip that is supposed to have taken nine days.

On the last day, having arrived at Bethlehem, and because the city was so full of people, they wandered about for a long time without finding admittance to either private house or inn. At last, being tired and weary, and because no room could be secured, they took refuge in a stable where Christ was born. Therefore, it is, that in order to celebrate this jour-

ney fully, the *posadas* begin with the journey at Nazareth. Each year a house is chosen in a family circle, or among a group of friends, and at that house for nine consecutive nights the festival is held. Or, sometimes, the celebration will be held at different houses during that period.

The journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem and the difficulties encountered on the way, are represented by the first part of the celebration. At the appointed hour the guests assemble at the house which has been chosen for the celebration on that particular night. Each person present, members of the family, guests and servants, is furnished with a lighted candle, and two and two, they march around the halls and through the corridors several times chanting the solemn "Litany of Loretto." As each invocation is ended the audience chant "*ora pro nobis*" ("pray for us"). At the head of the procession the figures of Joseph and Mary made of clay or wax, dressed in gay, incongruously-coloured satins are borne either in the hands or lying in a basket. Sometimes these figures are dressed in brilliant costumes of lace with tinselled borderings. At each door the procession pauses and knocks and begs admittance, but no answer or invitation to enter is given. When

the litany is finished some of the party enter a room while the rest with the figures of Joseph and Mary remain outside and sing a chant something like the following:—

"In Heaven's Name,
I beg for shelter;
My wife to-night,
Can go no further."

The reply to this is:—

"No inn is this,
Begone from hence;
Ye may be thieves,
I trust ye not."

At last, however, the door is opened and all go in and Joseph and Mary have secured shelter for the night. The pilgrims are placed on an improvised altar and some prayers are recited, though the religious exercises are generally hurried through in the quickest manner possible. Sometimes, to make the scene more realistic, a burro is introduced in the procession to represent the faithful animal that carried the holy family in their wanderings. Frequently, on the last night, in a room, or on the roof, a kind of stable is arranged in which the figures of Joseph and Mary are placed with the utmost

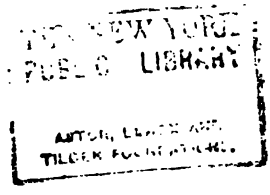
reverence. On this night a figure of the infant Jesus is also carried. After the litany the party proceed to have a general good time which is kept up until a late hour. Occasionally, in the homes of the wealthy, these entertainments are on a very elaborate scale and costly souvenirs are presented to each guest. Everywhere in the cities is heard the litany of the *posada,* for it is celebrated almost universally. It is sung in hundreds and thousands of homes and the processions wind in and out of the rooms and round the improvised shrines. The patios are hung with venetian lights, and fireworks blaze skyward in every direction. In the City of Mexico the *posadas* are most elaborate among the official and wealthy families, and the Zocalo plaza is a bewitching place with its many lights and the multitudes of children who gather here for celebration. The clergy are now censuring the "*posadas*" because of the irreverent spirit in which they are celebrated.

In Mexico the *piñate* takes the place of the Christmas tree. It is an oval shaped, earthen jar, handsomely decorated with tinsel and streamers of tissue paper, made up to represent curious figures. They represent clowns, ballet girls, monkeys, roosters, various grotesque animals, and even children almost life sized.

The jars are crammed full of sweets, rattles, whistles and crackers. The breaking of the *piñate* follows the litany and is an exciting event, which generally occurs in the patio. It is suspended from the ceiling and then each person desiring to take part is blindfolded in turn, and, armed with a pole, proceeds to strike the swinging *piñate*. Three trials are permitted. Sometimes many are blindfolded before a successful blow brings the sweets and bon-bons rattling to the floor. Then there is a race and a scramble for the dainties. Thousands of these *piñates* are broken each Christmas season and the vendors of them perambulating the streets with a pole across the shoulders on which are suspended the grotesque figures, add life and zest to the season. Then to see a well dressed, sedate-looking, business man hurrying home with a grotesque tissue-paper creation of gorgeous hues with tinselled decorations and gay streamers under his arms is a curious but not uncommon sight.

Holy week, as the week preceding Easter is called, is celebrated in an elaborate and truly original way. The religious processions which formerly attended these celebrations are now prohibited by law. During these few days the bells, organs and choirs are silent, the stores are

BURNING AN EFFIGY OF JUDAS AT EASTER-TIME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closed and there is a general holiday. As an evidence that vanity is not entirely absent, on Holy Thursday it is customary for men and women to turn out in good clothes and many of the ladies appear in handsome and elaborate gowns. Then on Good Friday everything is changed and the whole country mourns. Sombre black takes the place of the more brilliant raiment of the preceding day; downcast eyes and solemn faces succeed the smiles and coquettish glances of yesterday.

On Saturday occurs the most grotesque and curious of all the festivals of the Church. It is the day on which final disposition is made of that arch-traitor Judas Iscariot, and the day is devoted to his humiliation and death. Effigies of the traitor are hung over the streets everywhere and all day long men parade the streets with figures of the betrayer of Christ upon poles. These effigies range in size from miniature figures to those of gigantic proportions. Each figure is made of *papier maché,* is filled with explosives and has a fuse which is generally the moustache. Hundreds of the images are sold to the children in each city who explode them with great glee. Judas is represented with folded hands, arms akimbo, with legs in running posture and in every conceivable atti-

tude. Some of them bear suggestive mottoes such as " I am a scion of the Devil " and " Let me give up the Ghost." Each person must destroy a Judas.

At ten o'clock as the great bells of the cathedral in the City of Mexico sound and other bells follow, the fuses to these effigies are lighted. The great Judases strung across the streets or tied to balconies are exploded amid great rejoicing. Coins representing the thirty pieces of silver paid to Judas are sometimes thrown to the crowd from the windows of wealthy residents or clubs. Every one grows wild and the little folks become almost beside themselves with excitement. The bells in the towers ring out their rejoicings and a peculiar apparatus gives out a sound which represents the breaking of the bones of the thieves on the cross. The crowds also have innumerable rattles which make a hideous, grating sound intended to represent the same incident. The noise of the bells, the explosion of the firecrackers, and the shouts of the multitude form a strange, exciting, ludicrous scene never to be forgotten. When the last Judas has been demolished, the excitement subsides and a good-natured frolic follows.

The national holidays, of which there are

many, are greatly overshadowed by those pertaining to the Church, and none of them are so universally observed. Not all the feasts and festivals of Mexico are of Romish origin. Some of them are founded upon the remains of Aztec idolatry, for the priests of the early days with a wise foresight adopted the same day for feast-days in many instances. Though these Indians probably could not tell why, yet they have a great reverence for the saints whom they worship after their own fashion. They are delighted to have more occasions for decorating themselves and their churches with flowers, marching in processions, dancing and letting off rockets.

The *Fiesta de las Flores,* or Feast of the Poppies, celebrated in April, is held on the Viga Canal and was originally a day devoted to the worship of the Aztec god Quetzalcoatl, the god of nature with them. On that day the bloody, sacrificial rites were suspended and all joined in this festival of flowers. This *fiesta* has lost all its religious significance but it is said to be celebrated much the same as in Aztec times. All day long the canal is filled with boats large and small manned by the dusky natives. Indian women and nut-brown maids with wreaths of poppies on their heads and garlands of the same

around their necks, sing the songs of the people and dance as they move along. On the shore and in the boats the native bands play, and the broad highway along the banks of the Viga is crowded with long lines of carriages filled with the aristocracy of the Capital who have come out to witness this unique celebration.

Mexico, like each good Mexican Catholic, has a patron saint who presides over her destinies. This saint has not only been adopted by the government in times past, but has been proclaimed as the guardian of Mexico by the Holy See, and only a few years ago was duly crowned as the Virgin of Guadalupe in ceremonies made memorable by the large number of church dignitaries present. Her miraculous appearance came at an apropos time and greatly assisted in attracting the natives to the new worship.

The Aztecs had long worshipped a deity called Tonantzin, " Mother of Gods," who was supposed to reside on the Hill of Tepeyacac, now called Guadalupe. Tradition says that a devout Indian named Juan Diego, who resided in the village of Tolpetlac, and who recently had been converted to Christianity, was passing by this way on the morning of the 9th day of December, 1531, on his way to early mass. When at the base of this hill there suddenly

burst upon his ears a melody of sweet music, as of a chorus of birds singing together in harmony. Surprised at this unusual music he looked up and lo, just above him, rested a cloud more brilliant than a rainbow and in the centre of the cloud stood a lady. Thoroughly frightened he fell to his knees, but was aroused by a voice which proceeded from the cloud and called "Juan." He looked up and the lady told him to go to the Bishop of Mexico, and tell him that she wanted a church built on this hill in her honour. He did so, but the Bishop was loth to believe this wonderful tale from a poor, ignorant Indian. A second and yet a third time did the same vision appear to the pious Juan and make the same request. On this last occasion Juan had passed on the opposite side of the hill to avoid the woman but to no avail. Upon the report of the third vision the Bishop told Juan to ask for some unmistakable sign. The lady appeared again on the following morning and Juan told her of the Bishop's request. She told him to go up the hill and gather flowers from the barren hill-side where they had never been known to grow. As soon as he reached there many beautiful flowers appeared in a miraculous manner, which Juan gathered up in his tilma, or blanket, and took to the Bishop. When

he had emptied his tilma the image of the Virgin was found on the blanket in most brilliant colours.

The Bishop reverently took the tilma and accepted it as an unmistakable token. He at once began the erection of a chapel where it had been commanded. As soon as the chapel was completed, he hung the tilma on the high altar where it has remained ever since except for a few short periods. It can now be seen under a glass upon the payment of a small fee. Some persons say that upon examination it proves to be only a cheap daub upon coarse, cotton material; others say that it was taken out a few years ago and examined and they could not find any trace of paint, but that the colours seemed to stay there in some miraculous way. Not being permitted to make a personal examination, I leave the reader to make his choice as inclination directs.

From the time of its origin this legend has had a wonderful and deep influence upon the Indians. It is even so to-day. Our Lady of Guadalupe is looked upon by them as their patron and protector. Coming so soon after the conquest and appearing on a hill already sacred to that race, it led thousands to the new religion. The main church is very large and

imposing with a nave two hundred feet long and one hundred and twenty-two feet wide, and cost over two million dollars in gold. The altar is magnificent and it has a solid silver railing weighing several tons around the chancel. There is another chapel connected with the cathedral church. Back of these is the miraculous spring which burst forth from the very spot on which the Virgin stood at her last appearance. Half way up the hill are some stone sails erected by a grateful mariner, and on the top of the hill is another chapel. Back of this is a cemetery in which Santa Anna and other noted persons are buried. A beautiful view of the capital and the Valley of Mexico is obtained from the top of the hill which well repays for the exertion in climbing.

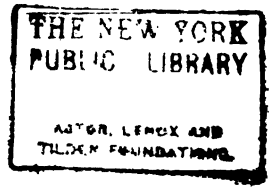
"From Heaven she descended,
Triumphant and glorious,
To favour us—
La-Guadalupana."

Thus sing the Indians on the 12th of December of each year. This is the day that has been appointed for the great "*fiesta*" in honour of the Virgin who appeared to Juan Diego. All others fade into insignificance and are completely overshadowed by the annual celebrations

in honour of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Any one who happens to be in the City of Mexico on this date, or a few days prior thereto, should not fail to take the street car for Guadalupe, a suburban town about three miles to the eastward. The route follows an ancient Aztec causeway which was old when Cortez invaded this valley. To the merry hum of the trolley, which seems strangely out of place on this historic highway, the traveller is carried along. One does not need to be told that something out of the ordinary is about to take place. The streets of the capital and all the roads leading to Guadalupe are alive with people on their way to this most sacred shrine. It is said that many of these Indians tramp hundreds of miles to be present on these occasions, taking their food with them and sleeping out in the open air. Tens of thousands of Indians are present at each annual celebration and the number is said in some years to equal a hundred thousand souls and more.

In Guadalupe the streets and plazas around the famous church are crowded with booths for the sale of native wares, candles, images of the Virgin and for the carrying-on of many kinds of gambling. There are many booths in which refreshments are served by women in native

CANDLE BOOTHS IN GUADALUPE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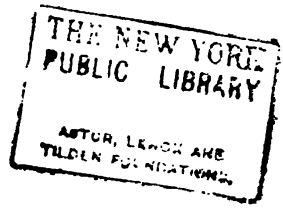
costumes. The viands include cold chicken, eggs, tamales, *frijoles* (beans), cakes and sweets. For beverages you can take your choice between beer and pulque. A motley assemblage is present. Indians from the hot lands mingle with the purer types of the Aztec from the mountains and table lands. The swarms of Indians fairly crowd the plaza and streets, some eating and drinking, some sleeping, some making love and some whiling away the time with cards or other gambling devices. All these people, of course, belong to the peon class. Mingled with the natives here and there are all types of Mexicans, and a number of Americans drawn here by curiosity add variety to the occasion. The lame, the blind and the halt are there too; for alms are plentiful and Our Lady possesses wondrous powers of healing. Many testimonials to this fact are seen in the little chapel which shelters the miraculous spring. Hundreds and thousands carry away with them a bottle of these healing waters.

A feeling of reverence pervades the sanctuary. The kneeling figures with bodies motionless and their eyes and faces fixed upon the high altar, crowd the floor until it is impossible to move. One can not help being impressed by this feeling of reverence pervading the church and

chapels. Outside it is different; for here the throng moves around visiting the booths, eating, drinking and gambling. Indian minstrels play their weird airs. Beggars cry out to give them something "*por el amor del Dios*" ("for the love of God"). At night the plaza and streets are one indistinguishable mass of dark, reclining and slumbering figures wrapped in their blankets and shawls. The elements are kind in December for it is the dry season.

The next day after one of these celebrations I left the capital for Puebla. For many miles we kept passing Indians singly, in groups, and whole families together homeward bound. They followed well-worn paths which were plainly visible. The trails were narrow and all marched along single file in regular Indian fashion. They would stop and look at our train as it noisily passed by. Perhaps they were happy in their simple way in the thought that for one year more, at least, Our Lady of Guadalupe would watch over and protect them, her humble worshippers.

BEGGARS OF THE CITY OF MEXICO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CHAPTER XIII

A TRANSPLANTED SPORT

THE bull-fight as an amusement is the exclusive property of the Spaniard. It originated in Spain and has never spread beyond the limits of Spanish conquest. Perhaps it is this very exclusiveness that causes them to cling to it so tenaciously, though legislatures and governments have made vigorous efforts to abolish the brutal spectacles. It is, according to a native writer, a proof of the superiority of the Spaniard, because "the Spanish men are as much more brave than other men, as the Spanish bull is more savage and valiant than all other bulls." Rather, it seems to me to be a survivor of the ancient gladiatorial contests, or fights between man and beast in the great amphitheatres of Rome.

I had never before, even when standing within the historic walls of the Colosseum, been able to picture in my own mind the scene of the arena crowded with combatants while the ex-

pectant multitude filled the seats in tier upon tier, until I found myself within the great bull-ring of Madrid. There was the arena, and round about were the eager throng, a crowd of fourteen thousand human beings who impatiently and anxiously awaited the sound of the bugle which would announce the opening of the spectacle of blood and brute torture. Then it was possible to understand how, in an earlier and more brutal age, the Roman populace gloated over the combats where the death of some of the participants was as much foredoomed as the fate of the bull who enters the ring to-day with a defiant toss of his horns.

If popularity is to be judged by the amount of patronage, then the bull-fight is the most popular amusement in Mexico to-day. The national life is permeated with the sport. The Sunday bull-fight is the topic of conversation in the capital for the following week. Even the children indulge in imitations of this favourite game in their childish way. It is only on Sundays and feast days that the *corrida de toros* occurs. Six days shalt thou do nothing and on the seventh go to the bull-fight, runs an old Madrid saying. They probably go on the theory that a good entertainment is better on that day than any other. It is useless to argue with a

Spaniard or Spanish-American about the brutality or inhumanity of these spectacles as they will immediately remind us of the prize-fights within our own borders which frequently result in death. This is a gentle hint that we should clean our own Augean stables before telling our neighbours what they should not do. Perhaps it is a rebuke that is not entirely out of place.

The Plaza de Toros is always a great, circular building of stone or wood with little pretence or ornament. It is built for the bull-fight and for no other purpose. The interior is an immense amphitheatre, with seats in tiers rising to the top where the private boxes are located. These alone have a roof, as all the rest of the structure is open to the sky. Half the seats are exposed to the bright sun and the other half are in shadow. The seats on the *sol,* or sunny side, generally cost only about half as much as those in the *sombra,* or shady part. The fights are usually advertised " if the time and weather permits." The ring itself is an arena about a hundred feet in diameter, encircled by a high board fence with a lower barrier on the inside, which serves as a means of escape for a *torero* who is too closely pursued by the irate bull.

Sometimes a bull will leap over this first barrier and then an exciting race follows.

An American will not soon forget the first sight of the full amphitheatre. The scene is an exciting one and there is a tension of the nerves in anticipation of what is to come. The bands play and, if there is any delay, the thousands of impatient spectators will shout and yell themselves hoarse. There is usually a cheer when the president for the occasion and his companions take their seats. At length the gates opposite the president are opened and a gaily caparisoned horseman, called the *alguacil,* appears. He asks permission to kill the bulls. This being granted, the president tosses him the key to the bull-pen, which he catches in his hat. He is cheered if he does catch it and hissed if he fails. The gate opens again and the gay company of bull-fighters is announced by the blast of trumpets. These men arrayed in costumes of red, yellow, green and blue silks, satins and velvets, glittering with beads, jewels and gold braid, form a brilliant spectacle as they march across the arena to salute the president, after the manner of the gladiators of old. Every one taking part in this exhibition appears in this procession, from the *matador* to the men with wheelbarrows and

shovels who clean up the arena after each performance. I said all, but the principal character himself is reserved until later. After saluting the president the company march around the ring to receive the plaudits of the people.

The bull-fight is a tragedy in three acts. After the company have withdrawn, the door through which the bull enters is unlocked and the first act begins with a flourish of trumpets. The bull rushes out from a dark stall into the dazzling light, furious with rage and trembling in every limb. This is an intense moment and all eyes are centred upon the newcomer. As he enters, a barbed steel hook covered with flowing ribbons is placed in his shoulder. The ribbons indicate the ranch or *hacienda* from whence he came. Even the street urchins can recognize the colours of a *hacienda* which has the reputation of producing animals that are noted for their belligerent qualities.

Startled by the intense light and enraged by the stinging of the steel hook, the bull stands for an instant recovering his senses. Sometimes he will paw the earth, toss the dust over his back and bellow his defiance. Around him in the ring are the *capeadores,* men on foot carrying red capes, and *picadores,* men on horses armed with lances. These latter sit

motionless as statues upon their steeds that are blindfolded ready for the sacrifice.

After a moment of uncertainty, the bull dashes either at a *capeador* or *picador*. The former quickly runs to the barrier and nimbly leaps over, leaving the bull more infuriated than ever. The horse attracts his attention next and there is no way of escape for this poor, old, broken down servant of man. The *picador* makes no effort to save his steed, which is blindfolded so that he may not see his danger, but simply plants his blunt spear-point in the shoulder of the brute. Sometimes this will save the horse, but it does not please the audience for a certain number of horses must be sacrificed. More frequently the bull will, with a single toss of the horns, overthrow both horse and rider in a heap. The *capeadores* then hover around with their cloaks and distract the attention of the bull from the prostrate rider who is helpless because of his iron armour. Once I saw a rider fall on the back of the bull much to the surprise of both. It is seldom that a *picador* is killed, for the bull will nearly always leave him and chase a red cloak.

Fortunate, indeed, is the horse that is instantly killed. If able to walk, he is ridden around in the ring again with blood streaming

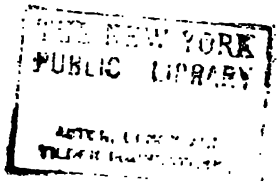
from his wounds and trampling upon his own bowels. Or the poor brute may be sewed up in a crude, surgical way in order to enable him to canter around the ring a few more times. Once, only, in an experience covering several bull-fights in several countries, have I seen a horse drop dead from the first blow. The fight is not complete without the shedding of the blood of horses, and sometimes the crowd will clamour for more horses before this act is closed. There must be enough, for economy in this feature will place the people in a bad mood. The audience must be catered to, for if disappointed they are likely to demolish the ring and tear up the seats as a method of showing their displeasure. This, in itself, is sufficient to prove the debasing and brutalizing influence of this sport.

In the second act the *banderilleros,* men who plant the *banderillas* in the neck of the bull, appear in the arena. This is the most artistic and most interesting act in the entire performance, for great skill is displayed and little blood spilled. These men come in the ring without cape or any means of defence and depend entirely upon their skill and agility for safety. They are finely dressed and are usually superbly built fellows with lithe and muscular bodies. The *banderillero* takes with him a pair of barbed

darts about two feet long and covered with fancy coloured paper with ribbon streamers. He shakes these at the bull, thus provoking an assault. Then, just when he seems to be on the bull's horns and the novice turns his face away to avoid the scene, he plants the darts in the gory neck of the bull and steps lightly aside. These darts re-enrage the bull, who has been getting rather tired of the whole affair. He attacks whatever engages his attention. It may be only a dead horse which he will then tear open, being aroused to fury by the smell of the blood.

There are usually two of these men and each plants four darts in the bull's neck. They must be placed in front of the shoulder and so firmly inserted that they will not be shaken out. If successful in these particulars, then the *banderillero* who is a favourite will receive prolonged applause and a perfect volley of complimentary comments. Even the *matador* himself ofttimes deigns to take part in this act. If so, he performs the act in some daring and novel way. They will sometimes sit in a chair and thus plant the darts, or take a pole and vault over the bull after placing them. Occasionally a bull is cowardly and will not fight. Then "fire" is called for and darts filled with

PLANTING THE *BANDERILLAS*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powder which explodes in the flesh are used. This will cause the bull to dance and skip around in his agony, which is very pleasing to the audience and furnishes variety to an otherwise monotonous exhibition.

The trumpet sounds the last act. This is the duel, — the death. Everything has been done with reference to this act. The first two acts have been intended to madden the animal and tire him by the violent exercise and loss of blood. He is panting, his sides heave as though they would burst, his neck is one mass of blood over which, as if in mockery, hang the many-hued darts. The man with the sword would not stand much show with a fresh and unwearied animal. This actor is the *matador,* or *espada,* and, if known as one who kills his bulls with a single stroke of the sword, he will receive great applause on entering. He steps forward to the president's box and makes a little speech, offering to kill the bull to the honour of Mexico. Throwing his hat to some one in the seats, (for it is considered an honour to hold any of his apparel) the hero advances sword in hand toward the bull, who, during this by-play, has been entertained by the cape-bearers again. He bears in his left hand a staff, called the *muleta,* over which is a red flag, and in the right

a keen-edged sword. The flag serves both as a lure to the beast and a protection to the man. He is usually pale and always alert, and studies the animal for a moment to ascertain his disposition. This can not be prolonged for the audience will not brook delay. The tension of nerves is too great. As the bull makes a rush for the red flag, with head lowered, the *matador* plunges the keen blade into the bull's shoulders up to the hilt. The bull staggers and dies.

It is wonderful to see how excited and enthusiastic the crowd becomes when the *matador* has made a skilful killing. They rise and cheer and wave their handkerchiefs. As he passes around the ring to receive their applause, a perfect volley of hats, coats, handkerchiefs, and cigars are thrown toward him. These are tossed back except the cigars or any money that may have been included. If the killing has been poorly made, or in a bungling manner, hisses replace cheers and boards or chairs may be thrown instead of hats and cigars At a fight in Guatemala City I saw one *matador* chased out of the ring, and he did not return again during that performance. This was done after he had made three unsuccessful attempts to kill the bull and had plunged two swords into the poor, tortured animal without striking a vital spot.

Then comes the finale. Teams of gaily-decked mules are brought in to drag out the dead bull and horses. The bloody places are covered over with sawdust in order to prevent slipping. Even before the dead animals are removed, the two or three *picadores* appear on other sorry-looking steeds, even worse than the first ones if such a thing were possible. The trumpet sounds, the door flies open and another bull comes rushing in to meet the same fate as the first. The play begins again with the same variety of sickening incidents. Others follow in regular order until the usual number of six bulls have been dispatched. The management is usually very careful not to promise more than will be performed, for they know the temper of the audience too well. At a bull-fight in Madrid, which I attended, the management had promised ten bulls in its posters but the tickets only called for eight. After the eighth bull had been dispatched the end was announced, but the crowd refused to leave. All over the vast amphitheatre rang the cry "*otro toro*" (another bull), repeated over and over again in one swelling cadence with ever-increasing volume. The management was obdurate and the multitudes left muttering their maledictions.

Formerly gentlemen of the court mounted on

the finest horses in the kingdom entered the arena and fought the bull like the knights of old. Now the sport has degenerated and is performed by professionals hired for the purpose. I once had the opportunity of witnessing a bull-fight by the Portuguese method. This is the bull-fight deprived of its disgusting details. It is even more exciting and dispenses with the killing of both bull and horses. The men with the red cloaks are employed just the same but the men who place the *banderillas* are mounted on horses. They are not broken-down hacks, but magnificent, well-trained animals and good care is taken that the bull does not make sausage meat of them. As a further protection, the points of the bull's horns are covered with balls to prevent injury to the horses. Their sport consists in riding past the bull, and placing the darts without permitting the bull to touch the horse. It is a feat that requires great skill and a steady nerve. After the bull is thoroughly tired out, a number of oxen are driven in the ring, the exhausted bull is taken out and another one brought in to continue the sport. In any form bull-fighting is bad enough, but if a line can be drawn between degrees of evil, the method of the Portuguese is the least to be condemned.

Tauromachy has many devotees who follow the fights in all their features as the base ball fan watches the sporting page of the American newspaper. In some places the spectacles are reported in all their most minute details, even down to the number of minutes it took the bull to die after receiving the fatal stroke. The killing of bulls is a science and there are many different schools which have been founded by great masters. A renowned *matador* receives as much attention as the champion prize-fighter in English speaking countries. They receive great sums of money but are almost invariably improvident and save little. The fights are not unattended by danger, for deaths are not infrequent and serious injuries are a common occurrence.

Ladies attend these spectacles and seem to derive as much pleasure as those who are supposed to be made of sterner stuff. Their black eyes sparkle with excitement and they shower their appreciation upon the successful one without reserve. It is the place for dress as the opera is in other lands. All the gallantry in the Spanish nature comes to the front on the way to and at the bull-fight. The enthusiasm, the manners, the expressions — all are distinctly national.

In Mexico the light on the horizon seems to be growing brighter, and the beginning of the end of this brutal and un-American sport is apparently in sight. It is not in favour with the present officials in the national capital and in many of the state capitals. Three of the most important states absolutely forbid the bull-fights, and heavy penalties are provided for any violations of the law. Statutes to prohibit them have been enacted in the federal district on more than one occasion, but they have been as often repealed so great was the popular demand for them. The best people do not now attend the performances in the City of Mexico but this fact has made little diminution in the crowd. Their places are taken by foreigners resident there, many of whom are among the most ardent supporters of the sport. I predict that within the next decade there will be few states in the Republic of Mexico that will permit the bull-fight within their borders. Such action may curtail a profitable industry and remove a good market for worn-out horses, but these material losses will be more than compensated in the development of those elements of character which can not be measured by the low standard of mere dollars and cents.

CHAPTER XIV

EDUCATION AND THE ARTS

ANY one who is acquainted with the conditions existing in Spain or any part of Spanish America would naturally surmise that education in New Spain is at a low ebb. What education does exist is confined to a few. When you know that districts can be found in Spain to-day where scarcely ten per cent. of the inhabitants have mastered the art of reading or writing, it is not surprising to learn that after three centuries of the rule of Spanish governors and viceroys, ninety-five per cent. of the population of Mexico still remained in profound ignorance. Learning for the masses was regarded as prejudicial by those representatives and misrepresentatives of the home government. One viceroy voiced this sentiment by saying that only the catechism should be taught in America. Students are not likely to go beyond the learning of their teachers, and these were obliged to pass examination in only the most elementary

branches. As a natural result, instruction soon fell into the hands of the incompetent. Teaching did not attract the bright minds. Those who cared for scholastic attainments prepared for the church or law. Others became soldiers or adventurers.

The first viceroy, Mendoza, was a broad-minded man and interested in his new empire. At his death he left a sum of money with which to establish a university to be open to all classes. This institution was actually established as early as 1551.

Very few of the aborigines attained much culture, although a few of the Aztec nobles were notable exceptions. Education was in general left to the church but was neglected by that institution. The Jesuits, whatever their faults may have been, were interested in education, and at the time of their expulsion in 1767 conducted a large number of colleges and seminaries.

In the seventeenth century the City of Mexico was looked upon as a great seat of learning and a literary centre. Even before the Shakesperian era of English writers, literature had its beginnings in that city. Bishop Zumarraga, the first "Bishop of the Great City of Tenuchtitlan," encouraged writers as well as miraculous visitations such as the Virgin of Guadalupe.

Through his efforts, the first printing press of the new world had been set up in this seat of ancient Aztec civilization, in 1535, about a hundred years before one was in use in the British colonies. A dozen books had been printed in the City of Mexico before 1550, and almost a hundred before the close of the sixteenth century. Some of these were printed in the Indian languages including the Mixtec, Zapotec, Nahuatl, Huaxtec, Tarascan and others.

The very first book printed on this first press bore the following impressive and "elevating" title: *Escala Espiritual para llegar al Cielo, Traducido del Latin en Castellano por el Venerable Padre Fr Ivan de la Madalena, Religioso Dominico,* 1536. Translated into English it means the Spiritual Ladder for reaching Heaven, Translated from Latin into Spanish by Father Ivan, Dominican. This book was written especially for students preparing for the priesthood, and no copies of it are in existence so far as is known. The second book was a Christian Doctrine, printed in 1539 "to the honour and glory of Our Lord Jesus Christ and of the Most Sacred Virgin, His Mother." It was published in the native language also "for the benefit of the native Indians and the salvation of their souls." A few of the books de-

parted from a strictly religious character, but all of them drew deep religious truths from every event. One of the early books was an account of a great earthquake in the City of Guatemala which, as the title page suggests, should be an example that " we amend our sins and be prepared whenever God shall be pleased to call us." Nearly all of these early books were written by Spanish priests and members of the religious orders. The first music of the new world was printed here also in the old illuminated style, as well as the first wood-engraving.

The first newspaper in Mexico was the *Mercurio Volante,* or The Flying Mercury, established in 1693. From that time until the present day, newspapers have existed, but they were so hampered and restricted in their utterances that their influence and circulation was small until long after independence had been proclaimed. Now there are a great many newspapers and periodicals of all kinds and descriptions published in the capital. However, no American would class them with our own newspapers, for the reason that they do not seem to have the " nose for news " of the American journalist. A Mexican reporter would not think of invading the sanctity of the home even for a " scoop " over his competitors. Likewise the family

skeleton is generally safe, which is certainly a commendable feature. Not one of the many newspapers published could be classed as sensational or of the "yellow" stripe. Mexico's reading public is comparatively small even to this day because of the still large illiterate class. *El Imparcial*, the leading daily and official organ of the government, does not have a circulation exceeding seventy-five thousand, scattered all over the republic. Its editor is an influential member of congress. It publishes an afternoon edition called *El Mundo* (the world). The *Popular* is second in circulation. *Tiempo* (times) is the leading Catholic daily. Other papers are *Pais* (country), *Patria* and *Sucesos* (events). There are two English newspapers published in the capital of which *The Mexican Herald* is the leading one and is the best newspaper in the country. It is widely read by both foreigners and official and influential Mexicans. There is an illustrated weekly, *El Mundo Illustrado*, an agricultural paper, *The Heraldo Agricola* and many other periodicals of various kinds. *Modern Mexico* is an excellent illustrated monthly magazine edited in the City of Mexico and published in New York. It is printed in both Spanish and English and is devoted to Mexican interests in general. Many

of the cities have daily newspapers, but they are generally inferior and uninfluential publications. The best paper published in Vera Cruz could not compare with an American newspaper published in a little hamlet.

Mexico has produced many writers and some of them have been very prolific in their productions. It can not be said that there was much originality to the early writers when they departed from historical lines, but there is a sprightliness and rhythm in their epics that holds the attention of the reader. The bright spots in the history of literature for the first generation after the conquest are made by a group of Indian writers, bearing the unpronounceable names of Ixtlilxochitli, Tezozomoc and Nitzahualcoyotl. These men recorded the glory of their ancestors in prose and poetry. Although their Spanish is faulty, their genius is clear. Bernal Diaz, the early companion of Cortez and afterwards governor of Guatemala, wrote from the latter place his "True History of the Events of the Conquest of New Spain." It is a very readable work and a fascinating account of an interesting country and a primitive race. The writings of Las Casas have been much criticised but they deserve mention. Other

chroniclers are Bustamente, Alvarez and Iglesias.

Poetry has always had a leading place in the literature of Mexico for the Spanish language is well suited to verse and their love poems have the highest rank. Some of the modern writers are better known in Europe than on this continent. The two leading poets are Juan de Dios Pesa, called the Mexican Longfellow, and José Peon y Contreras. The latter is foremost in the ranks of living poets.

Literary talent is much encouraged by the government and any one showing marked literary ability is almost sure to be offered some government position. An instance of this is seen in the career of Vicente Riva Palacio, a well known novelist and dramatist who has been governor, cabinet member and Justice of the Supreme Court. Another example was the poet Prieto who served in the cabinet of several presidents and died a few years ago. The Minister of Fomento (encouragement) can issue deserving books from the government press, if he so desires, and a number of works, especially historical treatises, have been issued in this way. The reason is, I suppose, because the reading public is not yet very large and a meritorious book would possibly have only a limited sale.

These conditions are fast passing away. The drama and the tragic have ever filled a large place in the life of the Mexican people. A number of their dramatic books have become well known in Spanish-speaking countries but have not been translated into English.

After the struggle for independence, nothing was done in the way of education until almost the middle of the last century. The colleges and schools already established had begun to languish. Even after that date little was done, because the church was so occupied in retaining its own foothold, and each successive government inherited only a burden of debt from its predecessors. Juarez had the desire to establish schools but not the means. Maximilian would no doubt have promoted education but his throne was never secure.

The development of the school system is so recent that it may safely be said to date from the first inauguration of President Diaz in 1876. Listen to what this so-called republican despot says upon this subject, which expresses the attitude of the present government: "Education is our foremost interest. We regard it as the foundation of our prosperity and the basis of our very existence. For this reason we are doing all that we can do to strengthen its activity

and increase its power. I have created a public school for boys and another for girls in every community in the republic. Education is such a national interest that we have established a Ministry of Public Instruction to watch over it. We have learned from Japan, what we indeed knew before, but did not realize quite clearly, that education is the one thing needful to a people; if they but possess it, all other distinctions are added unto them."

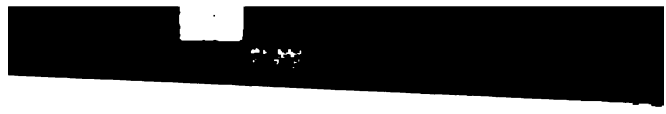
The educational system has been revolutionized, it might be said created, within a little more than a quarter of a century under the guidance of one man except for a period of four years. The schools are non-sectarian and the teaching of religion is absolutely prohibited. "That" says Diaz, "is for the family to do, for the state should teach only scholarship, industry and patriotism." The schools in the Federal District, which includes the City of Mexico and suburbs, and the territories of Tepic and Lower California, are under the direct control of the executive. The Federal District alone has nearly four hundred schools, and a number of fine new school buildings have been erected in the past four years after American models. The idea of a school building without a play ground is strange to an American, yet in Mexico none,

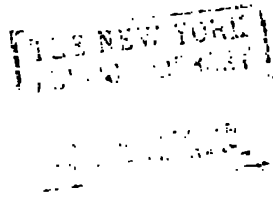
except the new ones, have any recreation ground whatever, and they are housed mostly in the old church properties that reverted to the government after the disestablishment. Another strange idea to the American mind is the separation of the sexes which is almost universal. The girls' schools contain fewer pupils, for the parents, if possible, send them to private institutions or employ private teachers. Within the past year several million dollars was appropriated by congress for the erection and equipment of new buildings in the Federal District. Commissioners have been sent to the United States to study school systems, and we find their schools divided very much as our own.

The schools in the various states are under their own control, and the number and condition varies accordingly.[1] In most of them primary

[1] Mexican statistics of public instruction show that the state of Jalisco has one school for every 2,354 inhabitants; Aguascalientes, one for every 3,103; Campeche, one for every 1,236; Coahuila, one for every 2,090; Chihuahua, one for every 2,731; Durango, one for every 2,468; Guanajuato, one for every 4,596; Hidalgo, one for every 1,020; Michoacan, one for every 2,888; Morelos, one for every 687; Nuevo Leon, one for every 1,158; Puebla, one for every 886; Queretaro, one for every 1,444; San Luis Potosi, one for every 2,592; Sinaloa, one for every 1,041; Sonora, one for every 1,092; Tabasco, one for every 1,018; Tamaulipas, one for every 1,777; Tlaxcala, one for every 700; Vera Cruz, one for every 1,268; Yucatan, one for every 792; Zacatecas, one for every 1,316, and Mexico, one for every 936. — *Modern Mexico.*

AN AZTEC SCHOOLGIRL

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instruction is compulsory. There are not many hamlets except in remote mountain regions where primary schools have not been established, although in many places greatly inadequate, if all those of school age should attend. In the cities, schools for the higher education corresponding to our own high schools are maintained at public expense. The English language is a compulsory study in certain grades, and one can almost see the time in the future when there will be two idioms in Mexico. Free night schools are maintained in some places for the benefit of those who can not attend during the day. The duties of citizenship are particularly impressed upon boys, and some feminine work is taught to the girls even in the primary schools. In addition to the government schools, the churches and private associations support many schools for pupils of all ages.

Perhaps nowhere are the results of the campaign for education seen to better advantage than in the soldiers' barracks and penal institutions. The soldiers are mostly recruited from the Indians and are without education. The same is true of those who fill up the jails and penitentiaries. However much they may deserve their punishment, humane methods prevail. Attendance upon classes is compulsory

upon both soldiers and convicts, and instruction is given in practical morals, civil government, arithmetic, natural science, history of Mexico, geometry, drawing and singing. If the prisoner is studious and obeys the rules of the institution, he is graduated and given his freedom. This little insight into a better life has made a good citizen out of many a former convict, and a better one out of a soldier who has completed the term of his enlistment. The native Mexicans are bright and intelligent, but self-culture is not common because of natural indolence. The Indians, and especially the *Mestizos*, are promising and quick to learn. Although there are no accurate statistics, it is estimated that nearly one-half of the adult population can at least read and most of that number can also write.

The first college established in North America was founded in Mexico in 1540 and is now located at Morelia. The federal government supports normal schools for the preparation of teachers, and schools of music, agriculture, dentistry, medicine, law, mining, fine arts and trades for both sexes. There are also schools for the blind and mutes, and reform schools for incorrigibles. The medical college has had a greater reputation than any of the other institutions of higher learning. This college now

occupies the old home of the inquisition. The staffs of these schools are generally finely educated men, and will compare favourably with the staffs of similar institutions in other countries.

The Biblioteca Nacional, or National Library, occupies a magnificent building that was formerly a noted monastery. It contains several hundred thousand volumes, and is a storehouse of ancient documents and volumes of the colonial periods. When the monastic orders were suppressed, more than one hundred thousand volumes were added to the national library from these institutions. Although most of their books and pamphlets were religious works, yet many of them are extremely valuable and almost priceless. There are a few books here that date back before the discovery of America by Columbus, and many rare old documents on vellum and parchment. A few of the picture writings of the Aztecs are also preserved in this interesting library. The National Museum is a vast storehouse of the antiquities of the country. One can wander around through the rooms and corridors for hours and days and continually find some new object of interest in the vast collection of relics of the prehistorical races.

Like all Catholic countries Mexico has the

traditional reverence for religious art. This love has caused a careful preservation of all the paintings that have been brought to the country, and the names of the donors as well. Nearly every church is adorned with some cherished painting, most of which are copies of works by the noted masters held in the great collections of Europe. However, here and there will be found a Michael Angelo, a Velasquez, a Guido, a Murillo or a Rubens. Perhaps the most cherished canvas in the entire country is a Titian at the village of Tzintzuntzan on the shores of Lake Patzcuaro. It is a large canvas on the walls of a little dilapidated church and represents the entombing of Christ. The room that contains it has but one outside opening and that an unglazed window.

Mexico herself has developed some expert copyists but few talented artists. One of the most noted was Cabrera, a Zapotec Indian, who has been called the Rafael of Mexico. He was architect, sculptor and painter, and has done some fine work in each line. Politics has in times past absorbed too much of the time of the young men of Mexico so that the arts have been neglected.

The Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes, or National School of Fine Arts, in the City of

Mexico is an excellent institution and is liberally supported by the government.

Charles Dudley Warner says: "It was a marvellous time of original and beautiful work that covered Mexico with churches, and set up in all the remote and almost inaccessible villages towers and domes that match the best work of of Italy and recall the triumphs of Moorish art."

No one with even the slightest love of architecture can help but be impressed with the great variety of design and grandeur of construction of the churches of Mexico. Though designed by Spanish architects and retaining the Moorish characteristics of that period, they are the work of native workmen and have received some Aztec touches. On the façades, towers and portals are designs and figures made by these workmen which are doubtless Indian legends or traditions of a prehistoric age. They resemble strongly those strange symbols of the ancient Egyptians and Persians. Some of the churches which the traveller encounters in villages consisting of low adobe huts fairly overwhelm one with their splendour. In places a great church will loom up in the horizon with scarcely a sign of human habitation near it. Only in the tropics are these great houses of worship wanting. The danger

of earthquakes precluded the building of lofty structures there, and the priests of the conquering age, which was the great era of construction, rather avoided the hot lands for the cooler plateaus.

The beauty and originality in the churches is principally in the exterior. This is the reverse of the architecture in the homes, for there the outside walls are plain, and skill and ornamentation are devoted to the decoration of the patio. The interior is generally quite commonplace, and a church in one city is very much like a church in another. The ornamentation of the exterior is very elaborate and of the rococo or, as some would call it, the over-done style. However when looking upon the extreme richness of detail, one can see and appreciate the beauty and merits of the style, even if there is a certain floridness and flamboyancy present. The towers resemble the towers which are a part of the mosques in Moslem countries from which the call to prayers is made by the priests. As Mr. Warner says: "There is a touch of decay nearly everywhere, a crumbling and defacement of colours, which add somewhat of pathos to the old structures; but in nearly every one there is some unexpected fancy — a belfry oddly placed, a figure that surprises with its quaint-

ness of its position, or a rich bit of deep stone carving; and in the humblest and plainest façade, there is a note of individual yielding to a whim of expression that is very fascinating. The architects escaped from the commonplace and the conventional; they understood proportion without regularity, and the result is not, perhaps, explainable to those who are only accustomed to our church architecture."

CHAPTER XV

MINES AND MINING

HUMBOLDT speaks of Mexico as the treasure house of the world. It is one of the most richly mineralized regions ever discovered, and has produced one-third of the world's supply of the white metal. Mexico, together with Peru, furnished the wealth that enabled Spain to build up her great empire. And many a real castle in Spain was built with the gold and silver taken out of these rugged mountains of New Spain. The thirst for gold became a disease among Spanish adventurers. The mind of Columbus was distracted by the sight of natives along the coast of Honduras, who were wearing pure gold suspended around their necks by cotton cords, and he temporarily gave up his voyage of discovery to search for the source of this great wealth.

No country can compare with Mexico in the amount of silver of pure quality that has been produced. The largest lump of silver ever

found, weighing two thousand seven hundred and fifty pounds, was discovered by a poor Indian in the State of Sonora. Because of a dispute as to the ownership, the crown solved the question by appropriating the entire amount. In fact the crown at first claimed two-thirds of all the precious metals mined which was afterwards reduced to one-fifth. Some authorities estimate the amount of silver that has been produced in Mexico at the enormous sum of $6,000,000,000, but two-thirds of that sum is probably in excess of the real value. The Taxco, Tzumepanco and Temezcaltepec mines date from 1539 but the greatest number of the "bonanzas" were discovered between 1550 and 1700. Many of them were located by priests, who, urged on by a fanatical zeal to convert the natives, pushed forth into unknown regions, and literally stumbled upon the rich ore-bearing quartz. The Spanish viceregal government kept an accurate account of the silver mined in their red-tape method, for the royal one-fifth was carefully and jealously looked after. Mine owners were compelled to make their reports regularly and correctly. A reference to these reports shows a record of almost untold wealth when it is remembered that this was long before the depreciation of silver.

The story of the bonanza kings makes interesting reading. They made money so fast that it was almost impossible to spend it except over the gaming table, in those days before the invention of modern surplus-reducing luxuries. One man, Zambrano, discovered a mine that made him extremely wealthy. Although he lived in the various capitals of Europe as extravagantly as the age permitted, yet he left a comfortable little fortune of $60,000,000 for his heirs to fight over. He even proposed to lay a sidewalk of silver bars in front of his house, but the authorities objected. He took out fifty-five million ounces of silver from one mine in twelve years as is shown by the government records.

Many of those who accumulated great fortunes were made grandees of Spain and some of the present titled families in that country are descendants of the famous bonanza kings of Mexico. Juan de Oñata who colonized New Mexico at his own expense, founding Santa Fe, and became its first governor about 1598, was a son of one of the mining kings, and the wealth dug out of the earth in old Mexico by his father furnished the means for founding that state.

Joseph de la Borda was one of the romantic characters of this age. He was a wandering

Frenchman who came from Canada in the first half of the eighteenth century and no one ever learned anything further about him. He made three fortunes and lost two of them because of his lavish gifts, most of which went to the church. He built several large churches in what is now the state of Hidalgo. After losing his second fortune, the Archbishop of Mexico gave him permission to sell a magnificent diamond-studded ornament that he had given to the church in Tasco. From this he realized $100,000, and after a great deal of prospecting, finally discovered another rich mine which yielded him many more millions.

Pedro Romero de Terreros, from a humble shopkeeper, became Count of Regla, after acquiring great wealth from his mine, La Viscayne. He built two large ships, one of one hundred and twelve guns, and presented them to his sovereign. He also loaned the crown $1,000,000 as freely as a man gives a friend a dollar, which sum the king never found it convenient to repay. In later life he founded the national pawnshop, which he called the Mount of Piety and which has grown to be such a great humanitarian institution in the capital and other cities.

The Conde de Valenciana who discovered the famous Valenciana mine of Guanajuato is re-

ported to have made and spent $100,000,000 in a few years. One man discovered a rich mine on his ranch near Durango that rendered him immensely wealthy. He sent a present of $2,000,000 to the king of Spain and asked permission to build galleries and *portales* of silver around his fine new home. This was refused on the ground that such display was the privilege of royalty only.

A Guanajuato miner paved the street with silver ingots for a distance of sixty yards for the procession to pass over on their way to the church on the occasion of the christening of his son. Another story is told of a mining king who, on a similar occasion, paved the main aisle of the church with bars of silver for the baptismal party to walk upon. After the ceremony he wanted to remove the silver bars, but the wily priest told him that it would be an act of impiety which the Almighty would surely punish. It was not done and the occasion proved to be an expensive christening for the crœsus. Godfathers became so reckless in throwing away money that one viceroy issued a proclamation forbidding them to fling handfuls of money in the street as had been their custom, because such acts encouraged improvidence.

I have seen the statement that there is one

man at Mazatlan to-day who owns a mine whose entrance is protected by massive walls and gates. Whenever he wants a hundred thousand or so of lucre, he simply takes in a few miners and digs out the ore and then gambles it away.

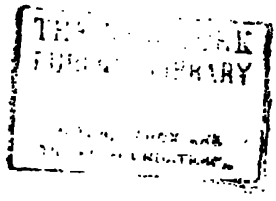
There is one noted mining king of to-day, Pedro Alvaredo, a full-blooded Indian, who is known as the peon millionaire. A few years ago a mine that he owned "bonanzad," as they call it, and he became immensely wealthy. However, he and his wife still dress in the peon clothes to which they were accustomed. He has built a mansion and furnished it with every kind of musical instrument to be obtained, including many makes of pianos. A few years ago he announced that he would pay off the national debt, but he found it a little too large.

The Spaniards worked only the very richest of the mines. They would not touch ore that did not yield nearly a hundred ounces to the ton. Their early methods were of the very crudest sort until the "*patio*" process was discovered and came into general use. If difficulties were met with in mining, these men simply worked around them and left great amounts of rich quartz untouched. The ore was so plentiful that they did not attempt to do their operations in a thorough manner. However they protected

the entrance by building great fortifications around the shafts, that look like the walled cities of old and were patrolled by armed guards. Vast shafts were constructed down which run ladders. The poor peon toils up these ladders which sometimes aggregate more than a thousand rounds carrying a rawhide sack on his back containing two hundred and fifty pounds of ore without a rest, and will make several trips a day. In early times the natives were compelled to work in these mines to all intents and purposes as slaves, and were beaten and flogged even to death if they refused to obey their taskmasters. At night each peon was searched for fear he might conceal some of the precious metal. However as their costume was exceedingly simple the search was a very easy matter. The mines were cleared of water in the same way by the peons carrying it up these long ladders in rawhide buckets. Many mines were abandoned on account of water in those days long before their wealth was exhausted. Transportation was slow and expensive, and the mountain trails were kept dusty by the long trains of pack mules transporting treasures and supplies.

Until within the last few years since American capital has undertaken to develop many of the Mexican mines, only the most primitive

PEON MINERS AT LUNCH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methods were in use. Even to-day many are operated in the same old way, although modern machinery is being rapidly introduced. The expense of fuel has been a great drawback in the less productive mines, and the shafts many hundreds of feet deep are worked with a windlass and mule power. Coal costs as high as $15 (gold) per ton at the mine and is then cheaper than wood at $14 (silver) per cord. At these prices steam power becomes very expensive. In those early days only those ores could be mined at a profit that could be treated at the mine, because of the great expense of transporting the ore-laden rock on the backs of mules.

The patio process of amalgamating silver is still generally used. This first came into use in 1557, being discovered by Bartolome de Medina, a miner. The ore is first crushed into a powder by an immense rolling stone that is revolved by teams of mules. This powder is then carried into a patio, or paved court, by a stream of water until the mass is about two feet deep. Quicksilver, salt and blue vitriol are then thrown into it and several teams of mules are driven around and around until the mass is thoroughly mixed, which requires several weeks. This is then thrown into troughs of water, where the amalgam of silver and quicksilver will sink to

the bottom. By a process of distillation the silver is then separated from the quicksilver. Within five years after the discovery of this process Zacatecas alone had thirty-five of these reduction works in operation. It is claimed that not over ten per cent. is lost by this simple method. The poor mules eventually become horrible looking sights from the action of the vitriol on their legs. This patio mud has been used in the construction of the huts of the peons. A company was formed to tear down a whole row of these huts in Guanajuato just to extract the little metal that was left in them. The crown retained a monopoly on the quicksilver, and realized great profits upon this necessary metal in treating the silver ore.

The first bonanza mines were discovered at Zacatecas in 1546 by Juan de Tolosa. So rich were they and so great was the influx of miners, that the place was made a city forty years later. For two hundred and fifty years fabulous sums of silver were taken from the hills surrounding this quaint city. Some of the richest mines of the country have been located near Pachuca. More than three hundred silver mines are found there and in the near-by districts of Regla and Real del Monte. One mine, The Trinidad, is said to have yielded $50,000,000 in ten years.

There was very little stock speculation with the mines in the early days. There was at least one exception where an English company bought an old producing mine and the $500 shares rose to $80,000 but in the end the mine proved to be a failure. Catorce is also a rich mining town, and the mines have produced many millions of silver ore. The State of Oaxaca is likewise rich in gold and silver bearing quartz. None of the great bonanzas were found there, but a steady stream of gold and silver has been produced by the Oaxaca mines. I heard an interesting story of a young prospector who had spent several years and all his money in the search for wealth near Ejutla in that state. Having only a few dollars left he invested his all in dynamite and placed it in the lode with a prayer for luck. The blast revealed a rich " lead " which he sold for $600,000 a few days later.

The richest mineralized section in the whole republic is probably that in and around Guanajuato, the " hill of the frogs." This district was discovered by two mule drivers in 1548 who were on their way from Zacatecas to the City of Mexico, and from that date until the present time a billion and a half dollars' worth of silver has been produced. A hundred years ago Guanajuato was one of the largest cities and it is

admitted by all travellers to be one of the most picturesque cities in the New World. Its wealthy mine owners lived like princes and spent their money like drunken sailors. Fortunes were made and lost. About a hundred years ago two mines there were producing four million ounces of silver annually. These mines were worked by the Aztecs long before the Spaniards came. This is called the La Luz district.

To-day Guanajuato is a much smaller city than it was a half century ago because of the decrease in mining activity. The Theatre Juarez is a beautiful building and was built and is owned by the state, which seems strange to an American. The state or municipal ownership of theatres in Spanish-American countries is quite common. The Republic of Guatemala takes more pride in its national theatre, the Teatre Colon (Columbus), than in any other public building. A curious sight in this city of Guanajuato is the panteon, or crypt, where bodies are buried for five years. If burial fees are not paid again at the end of that time, the bones are thrown in a heap. However, many of the bodies are found mummified and these are placed against the wall making a horrible, gruesome sight, — one that will not be soon for-

gotten by the traveller. It is like the crypt underneath the Capuchin Church in Rome.

The Spanish conquerors mentioned nothing of silver among the Aztecs, but all their ornaments were of gold. The value of the presents of gold ornaments given to Cortez by Montezuma is estimated by Prescott at more than $7,000,000. The source of this great gold supply has never been discovered, for, although gold in small quantities is found in many places intermingled with silver, yet the amount mined was very small in comparison with the value of the silver. In more recent years owing to improved methods of separating the precious metals from the quartz, the proportion of gold produced has been increasing. From 1810 to 1884 mining reached a very low ebb because of the unstable form of government and constant revolutionary movements. The crude methods formerly in use became unprofitable, and foreign capitalists were afraid to invest money for fear that a change in the government might occur over night and wipe out everything. The old mines had been worked to such a depth that they were flooded and could not be kept in workable condition by the bucket brigade. The disturbed political conditions had developed large and bold bands of robbers; and as all traffic had to

be carried over lonely mountain trails, mining became very insecure and consequently unprofitable.

Since the extension of the railway systems and the establishment of a stable government, mining is again attracting a great deal of attention. The government encourages foreign investments in the mines. Many of the old bonanzas have been taken over by new companies with both good and bad results for the investors. The introduction of modern machinery has so reduced the cost of mining that lower grade ores can be profitably worked. Even the dumps that have been accumulating for centuries are being worked over at a fair profit. Smelters and mills for the cyanide process are springing up in all of the mining regions. Modern pumps are taking the place of the mule and windlass in keeping the mines free from water. The fame of the old bonanzas has no doubt aided in fleecing the gullible through fake companies organized by unscrupulous and even criminal promoters. American miners and prospectors are met with all over Mexico in the mining districts. It is safe to say that the majority of them have either met with disappointment or are living in hope of a " strike." These conditions are

the same in every mining district the world over.

The mining laws are simple and practical. Boards are established in every mining community who look after the mining interests. Any one discovering a claim can " denounce " it before this board and he is protected. Foreigners have the same rights as citizens in " denouncing " a claim. A mining claim is called a " *pertenencia* " and is one hundred metres square thus consisting of ten thousand square metres. The surface ground must be settled for with the owner. A tax of ten dollars must be paid annually to protect the claim from forfeiture. More than twelve thousand claims are now on record as shown by government statistics. The government only claims a one-twenty-fifth instead of the royal one-fifth exacted by Spain.

The number of men employed in the mines at the present time is about two hundred thousand. Wages are low and average about fifty cents for common labour and one dollar for native miners in Mexican money. However, in recent years wages at the mines have had a tendency to rise. Mexico's annual production of silver amounts to from $30,000,000 to $35,000,000 in gold value and gives it first place.

As the price of silver is advancing, the production will no doubt be further stimulated. It now ocupies fifth place in the production of gold, being exceeded only by the Transvaal, Australia, United States and Russia. The production of Mexico in 1906 reached a value of $15,000,000.

Many other minerals are found in Mexico. Perhaps the most valuable, next after gold and silver, is copper of which there are a number of rich deposits. In 1906, one hundred and thirty-five million pounds of copper were mined. When this is compared with a production of nine hundred and fifteen million pounds in the United States for the same period it is not a bad showing for Mexico. Iron is not generally distributed but there is a mountain of nearly ninety per cent. pure iron ore at Durango. Tradition says that the Indians first led the Spaniards to Durango by tales of a mountain of gold where the yellow metal sparkled on the surface. When they arrived at this mountain, now called Cerro del Mercado, they pointed to the outcroppings of pyrites which the ignorant natives thought — or pretended to think — were of the same metal that these strange white men had come across the unknown seas in search of. A little coal

has been found but not in quantities sufficient for even local consumption and many thousands of tons of coal are imported each year from England and the United States. Lead is found in large quantities and most of the graphite used in the United States is imported from Mexico. Petroleum has been found on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and near Tampico in considerable quantities and the production is being rapidly developed. Two of the railways have already adopted this fuel.

Wonderful progress is being made in developing the mineral resources of this country and it is possible that greater discoveries will yet be made. The wealth of Mexico to-day is not being spent in building empires by enslaving the natives; nor is it being squandered after the manner of many of the bonanza kings; but it is being spent along legitimate lines and is one of the greatest aids in building up a strong republic and developing a nation of intelligent and liberty-loving citizens.

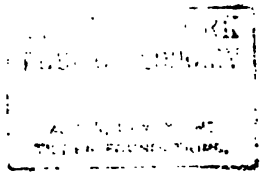
CHAPTER XVI

RAILWAYS AND THEIR INFLUENCE

A work upon Mexico would be incomplete without a description of the railways and the present progressive railway movement. Nothing has contributed in such a degree to the great progress that has been made in the last quarter of a century in Mexico, as the rapidly increasing railway lines. This is true not only of the influence these advance agents of progressiveness have had upon commerce, but they have enlarged the intercourse with other nations, especially with the United States. Through this means the dormant energies and ambitions of the Mexican people have been awakened, and a new era has dawned in our Latin neighbour.

The centres of population in Mexico have always been situated in the great central plateaus in the interior. Only a very small proportion of the population live on, or near the coast. Communication with the ports was over

PRIMITIVE TRANSPORTATION



long, narrow and rough trails. The transportation of commerce was slow and expensive, and required great droves of slow-moving pack mules and patient burros, and whole armies of cargadors. Furthermore, the very isolation of the people and difficulty of communication kept them aloof from modern progress, and left them content with things as they were, with no ambition for anything more advanced or better than had been enjoyed by their forefathers. It also prevented the development of a real, national spirit, because one community was, in a true sense, not familiar with the neighbouring cities, and took a special pride in its local interests rather than in the idea of a homogeneous, strongly-centred whole.

So jealous were those employed in the business of transportation in the old crude way, that, in order to placate them, some of the earlier roads were obliged to commence construction at the point furthermost from the port, in order to give employment to these people in transporting the material from the port to the place of beginning. Those who are familiar with the great development of the west, since the construction of our own trans-continental lines, will better appreciate the change that railroad construction has wrought in Mexico.

There is this difference, however, that the people were in Mexico before the railroads were built, and, instead of a newly-developed country it is a rejuvenated old country.

Prior to the beginning of the railway movement, Mexico was noted chiefly for its minerals. Now, although only a small portion of the mineral wealth has been dug out of the earth, mining has become of secondary importance. The increase in commerce and manufacturing, and the stimulus to agriculture brought about by these avenues of communication, have swelled the general wealth of the country far more than the millions of white metal extracted from old mother earth each year. Manufacturing plants have sprung up on every hand, and the products of the mills are increasing in volume and variety each year. Mexico could, probably, after a fashion, supply all the wants of her people without any imports from the outside world. The factories include almost every line of trade from the making of articles to adorn the outward man to the solid and liquid goods which cheer and sustain the inward man.

The railroads have tended to enlarge the wants of the people by throwing them into contact with other civilizations and have raised

the general standard of wages so that the people have more money to expend for material needs and luxuries. The abolishment of the *alcabales,* or local customs, was the logical result of the development of railways and was almost revolutionary. From the time of the Spanish conquest each city had collected a local tariff on all goods brought into the town for sale, and had raised a great part of its revenues in this way. Changes come slow in this country, but are nevertheless sure. It may be that at some time in the future the brown back of the burden-bearing cargador will be relieved of its load. It is a question, however, whether this change would be welcomed by the dusky descendants of Montezuma.

The encouragement given to railroad construction has been done with a lavish but well-directed hand. It is estimated that more than one hundred and fifty million dollars have been spent by the Mexican government in subsidizing railroads and in developing harbours, and the end is not in sight yet. Perhaps the motive has not been altogether unselfish for no one influence has assisted so much in centralizing the power in the hands of the Diaz government or been such a potent force in tranquillizing a naturally turbulent people, as the railways and

the telegraph lines which always accompany them. Instant notice would be sent of any embryonic revolutionary movement and troops could be hurried to the affected district at once. There were at the close of 1906, according to government report, twenty-one thousand six hundred and eleven kilometers of railway track in Mexico, or about thirteen thousand five hundred miles, and this is increasing at the rate of several hundred miles each year. The subsidies on the principal lines have averaged from $10,000 to $15,000 per English mile, with the provision in most instances that after a certain period (generally ninety-nine years) the roads shall revert to the government at a certain fixed valuation. Construction is either of such a difficult character, or over such long stretches of semi-desert territory with poor and scattered population, that most of these roads would never have been built except for government assistance.

After the manner of the Romans and with equal truthfulness, the Mexicans say that all roads lead to the City of Mexico. This saying is almost literally true. The Valley of Mexico is traversed from every direction with the *ferro carriles,* or roads of iron, converging toward the capital. It now has direct communication

by rail with almost every part of the republic except Yucatan and the Pacific slope, and can reach this coast at one point by a roundabout way to Salina Cruz.

The back-bone of the extensive railway system is formed by the two great trunk lines which reach out to the north from the City of Mexico, gradually diverging until at the places where they cross the muddy Rio Grande they are several hundred miles apart. These railways traverse the broad central plateau of which Humboldt, the great traveller, wrote, "so regular is the great plateau and so gentle are the slopes where depressions occur, that the journey from Mexico to Santa Fe, New Mexico, might be made in a four-wheeled vehicle." There are hundreds of miles where construction work was exceedingly easy, as it consisted simply of shovelling up a slightly raised bed and laying the ties and rail. Rough mountain construction in other places, and especially in entering the Valley of Mexico, required the work of the very best engineers. By whichever route the traveller enters Mexico it would be well if he could sleep over the first two hundred miles while the train is passing over the semi-desert plains of Northern Mexico where the dust filters through the car windows in clouds.

The government of Mexico has entered the railway field for economic reasons. It is simply another indication of the intention on the part of President Diaz to control the railway situation in behalf of the people by preventing excessive rates through the pooling of interests. The spectre of railway consolidation similar to the merging of the great systems in the United States influenced the officials more than anything else, and the government did not want the railway situation in Mexico controlled by any of the large American companies. The project was begun only a few years ago by actual purchase in the open market of a controlling interest in the National railroad. This purchase was made by a select firm of New York brokers, and the real buyer was not revealed until sufficient stock had been secured to insure control of the properties. These lines are now known as the National Lines of Mexico and have a mileage of about eight thousand miles. They will be held by a corporation with a capital of $250,000,000, organized under the laws of Mexico, the control of which will be vested in the Mexican government, although there will be a minority board in New York. They include one hundred and sixty miles of track in the

United States from Laredo to Corpus Christi, Texas.

The main line of the system is the former National Railroad extending from Laredo to the capital, a distance of eight hundred and thirty-nine miles, several hundred miles shorter than the Central. It passes through the important cities of Monterey, Saltillo, San Luis Potosi and Celaya. Originally constructed as a narrow gauge line, it has been changed to standard width throughout its entire length. The Mexican International Railroad, which enters Mexico at Eagle Pass and runs through Torreon to Durango with a branch to Monterey, has been added. The Interoceanic Railway, whose main line connects the capital with Vera Cruz, passing through Puebla, the third largest city in Mexico, is also now a part of this system. At the present time this line is narrow gauge, but preparations are now being made to widen it to standard gauge. Quite recently the government purchased the Hidalgo Railroad, which extends from the City of Mexico to Pachuca, State of Hidalgo. It is the intention of the government to extend this line immediately to Tampico, thus making a short and direct route to this port.

In December, 1906, the government announced the purchase of the Mexican Central

Railway, its only large competitor, and this road will be added to the system known as the National Lines. The reasons for this purchase were stated by Minister of Finance Limantour to be "the aggressive attitude assumed by certain great railway systems in the United States." It was feared that the great railways of the United States would step in and absorb this important line, and saddle upon the people the trust evil. The Mexican Central is the largest railway system within the republic and owns more than three thousand five hundred miles of track. The main line extends from El Paso, Texas, to the capital in a southeasterly direction a distance of one thousand two hundred and twenty-four miles. This was the first road constructed to the United States border and received the largest subsidy of any line, amounting to $15,200 per mile. Construction work was begun in 1880 at both terminal points and rushed to completion so that through trains were running less than four years later. This made an average of nearly one mile for each working day. It traverses sections rich in agriculture and mineral resources and passes through many of the important cities. Among these are Chihuahua, Torreon, Zacatecas, Aguas Calientes, Leon, Irapuato, Celaya and Quere-

tero. It reaches a population of several millions on the table lands.

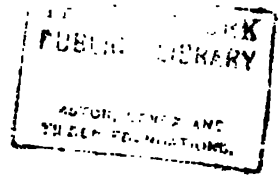
Two important branches of the main line run to the gulf port of Tampico, which is second only in importance to Vera Cruz. One of these lines branches off at Aguas Calientes passing through San Luis Potosi, and the other at Torreon, passing through Monterey. At Irapuato a branch line runs west to Guadalajara, the second largest city in Mexico, and is being extended through to Manzanillo, a good harbour on the Pacific coast. It is expected that this road will be completed January, 1908, and will give the capital what has long been needed — a direct route to the Pacific. The difficulty and great cost of construction in reaching this coast has delayed the various projected lines, for the drop from the high plateaus to the sea level is very abrupt. It is estimated that the last hundred miles of this extension will cost $5,000,000 in gold. Another branch of this system extends south from the capital through ancient Cuernevaca to the Balsas River, with an ultimate destination of Acapulco, the finest harbour on the Pacific Coast of either North or South America. There are also numerous smaller and less important feeders.

The Mexican Railway which connects the

port of Vera Cruz with the City of Mexico is the oldest railroad in the republic. It was first incorporated under the empire in 1864 as the Imperial Mexican Railway and exceedingly favourable concessions were granted. Owing to the political disturbances it was not completed until 1873. It was built with English capital and cost a fabulous sum. The monopoly which it held for years enabled it to pay big returns to its owners for a long period and even now its earnings compare favourably with our own western lines. This road is noted as one of the most picturesque railways in the world, for in a few hours one is transported from the high plateaus to the sea level.

The Mexican Southern Railway is another English road extending from Puebla south to Oaxaca, which was opened for traffic in 1893, a distance of 227 miles. This road received a bonus of about $10,000,000 in government bonds, and well it needed such an inducement, for the traveller wonders in passing over the line where the profit can come from, as there are only a very few places of any size between the two terminal points. It opens up a rich agricultural and mineral section in the Valley of Oaxaca, and will probably develop into a profitable property in the future. As the line

ALONG THE MEXICAN SOUTHERN RAILWAY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runs through narrow ravines a great part of the way, following streams, the traveller does not see the best part of the country traversed.

The Southern Pacific has a branch which runs from Benson, Arizona, to Guaymas, the chief port on the Gulf of California, passing through Hermosillo, the capital of the State of Sonora, the home of the Yaqui Indians. It passes through an intensely interesting country, possessing a wealth of scenery and natural resources. This line is being extended farther south, with an ultimate destination of Guadalajara or possibly the capital city.

Another important link in the system of railroads in Mexico, and one which is practically owned by the government is the Vera Cruz and Pacific Railway. This road extends from Vera Cruz to Santa Lucrecia, a station on the Tehuantepec National Railway which is described in another chapter. A branch line also extends to Cordoba, there connecting with the Mexican Railway, and forms what is at present the only all-rail route from the capital to a Pacific port. This road runs through the heart of the tropics and alternately passes over prairie and through tropical jungle.

A trip over this road is a revelation to the traveller who has never visited a tropical land.

No one except those who assisted in the work fully appreciates the enormous difficulties that had to be overcome. I doubt if even mountains present more perplexing problems in railroad construction than these level prairies and swamps, where there is no solid rock or gravel and the country is deluged with an annual rainfall of from twelve to sixteen feet. The surface is a soft clay unfit for roadbed or ballast. After heavy rains the ties and often the rails would sink into it until completely covered. For a few years the road was practically abandoned for several weeks during the heaviest rainfall. The track would sometimes slip sideways, or in a cut the banks would slide in and cover it. In the two hundred and forty-two miles of the main line, the road crosses six large rivers, whose size is due to the amount of rainfall rather than the extent of territory drained. These rivers and many smaller streams require an average of more than one bridge for each mile of track. The uncertainty and inefficiency of native help and difficulty of getting skilled American labour to go there because of the fear of tropical fevers, rendered the work of the contractor no easy task. Even an American workman could not accomplish more than about half as much as in a colder climate.

I made this trip when it required twenty-six hours to cover the two hundred miles from Vera Cruz to Santa Lucrecia. No one asked the engineer to go faster, and we considered ourselves in luck not to run off the rails, which in many places resembled the track made by a wobbly wheel after we had passed over it. It has now been placed in better condition, and the run is made in much quicker time. No one must expect quick time on Mexican railroads, for twenty-five miles an hour is fast travelling and the average is nearer fifteen miles. The section traversed by this road must inevitably be the richest part of Mexico in the near future, now that it has an outlet. It passes through the region best adapted for tropical plantations where the soil is inexhaustible.

One of the dreams of the late James G. Blaine was a Pan-American railroad or all-rail route from the United States to the southernmost republics of South America. President Arthur appointed a commission in 1884 which was sent to the republics of Central and South America along the proposed route. At the first Pan-American conference held in Washington, this projected railway was discussed at considerable length. All the representatives were in favour of it and a survey was decided upon. Several

parties of surveyors were set to work at different points along the proposed route, and a complete survey was made from Oaxaca, Mexico, to the northernmost point reached by the railways of the Argentine Republic. The proposition excited a great deal of interest and discussion at the time, but little has been heard of it in recent years. There is one man in Mexico, however, who has not lost sight of the great project, and that man is J. M. Neeland. He organized a company to build the Pan-American Railroad from San Geronimo, a station on the Tehuantepec National Railroad to the boundary of Guatemala, a distance of about three hundred miles. The Mexican government promised a subsidy of $10,000 gold, per mile. He has followed the base of the mountain range in order to lessen the expense of construction, and render it easy to connect with the ports by means of branch lines. It follows as nearly as possible an old military road constructed by the Spaniards.

Quietly and unostentatiously this line has been pushed forward until it has been completed to Pijijiapam, only one hundred and twenty-six miles from the Guatemala boundary, and a contract has been let for its completion by the close of the year 1907. The importance of this line

to Mexico can hardly be overestimated, for it connects the seat of government by an all-rail line with the most remote corner of the republic. It also opens up the rich coffee lands in the State of Chiapas, the best coffee territory in Mexico. The ports along this coast are all open roadsteads without piers, and freight is carried to and from the steamers in lighters. At one time a steamer on which I was a passenger lay at San Benito, the most southerly Pacific port of Mexico and on the line of this railway, three days in order to load a few thousand bags of coffee. This part of the country has been so isolated heretofore that it has never been developed to any extent. The completion of this Pan-American railroad will greatly increase the influence of Mexico in the little Republic of Guatemala, and will have a tendency to render that country less turbulent. The promoters aim to continue this road through all the republics of Central America, clear to the Isthmus of Panama. They have already secured a concession with the promise of a good subsidy from Guatemala, and will utilize a portion of a railroad now in operation in that country. A remarkable fact in connection with this road is that it is already meeting its operating expenses

and fixed charges, which is an unusual showing for a newly-built Mexican railroad.

President Diaz is now endeavouring to have a railroad constructed from some point on the Pan-American Railroad to connect with the railways of Yucatan. This road and the other lines already under construction will connect all parts of the republic with the bands of steel, with the single exception of Lower California. It will not be many years before this great plan of a great president will be a reality. Step by step progress has been made but the improvement has been permanent. In some places the innovation was not welcomed at first, because of extreme conservatism. Now everyone reaps some benefit from it. Before the days of railroads each community lived by itself, and the poor natives were at the mercy of the rich plantation owners in the dry years which sometimes occurred. Now, transportation is cheap and quick, and everyone can have food at a reasonable cost. The paternal character of the government in this respect was shown a few years ago, when the corn crop was a partial failure and a " corner " was attempted by the dealers. The government immediately removed the tariff, imported great quantities of grain, and sold it to the people at cost. This could not

have been done except for the facilities afforded by the railway lines. The traffic does not seem large, and there is only one train per day each way on most of the lines, and on the branches this is frequently a mixed passenger and freight train. The tonnage is increasing each year as the wants of the people increase, and money to purchase things heretofore regarded as luxuries becomes more abundant.

CHAPTER XVII

RELIGIOUS FORCES

THE Aztecs, who originally believed in one supreme invisible creator, Taotl, adopted the gods of conquered races, like the Romans of old, and became polytheists. The Toltecs, one of the vanquished people, were nature worshippers, and made offerings of fruits and flowers to their deities. After their defeat, the peaceful gods of the Toltecs, who took pleasure in the offerings of the fruits of the soil, soon took a place by the side of the terrible god of war of the Aztecs, Huitzilopoxtli, and shared with him the offerings of human sacrifices. This repulsive deity is portrayed as a hideous idol with broad face, wide mouth and terrible eyes, but was covered with jewels of gold and pearls and girt with golden serpents. At the altars hung censers of incense and braziers filled with the hearts of the victims offered in sacrifice. It is said that this god was ministered to by more than five thousand priests.

When the Spanish conquerors came, the policy of Cortez left the Mexicans no alternative but the adoption of the Christian religion. "Conversion" and "Baptism" became interchangeable terms and the baptized pagan was immediately considered a good Christian even though the conversion only followed the judicious use of the fire and rack. One of the priests boasted that his "ordinary day's work was from ten to twenty thousand souls." Within a few years after the conquest baptism had been administered to more than four million Indians. Dreams of avarice swayed the minds of the conquering legions, for it was believed that from the unknown, western world was to come the gold that was to make every man a Crœsus. But first these ungodly people must be converted to Romanism. As the unlettered Indians could not understand the real spirit and meaning of this new religion, visible symbols and pictures were substituted for the former idols. Humboldt, the traveller so often quoted because of his careful research, says: "The introduction of the Romish religion had no other effect upon the Mexicans than to substitute new ceremonies and symbols for the rites of a sanguinary worship. Dogma has not succeeded dogma, but only ceremony to cere-

mony. I have seen them marked and adorned with tinkling bells, perform savage dances around the altar while a monk of St. Francis elevated the Host." It soon became a religious duty for the Spaniard returning from Europe to bring paintings and statues of saints to adorn the newly-erected churches, and holy relics of the saints to place therein. In this way these cruel invaders no doubt sought to satisfy their consciences for their outrages upon a mild and unresisting people. It is little wonder that the Indians could not fully appreciate the humanity of the lowly Nazarene when represented by such ferocious invaders.

A few of the Aztec gods blossomed out as Christian saints soon after the Conquest, through the ingenious schemes of the early priests who adopted this method to make the new religion accepted. They brought with them into the Roman Church the particular characteristics and powers which they were credited with as gods. As for example, the goddess of the rains who was much worshipped in the regions of little rain can be recognized in Our Lady of the Mists, or Our Lady of the Rains of the Mexican church. These saints are appealed to for the much-needed rain and are believed to have the same power to bring it which

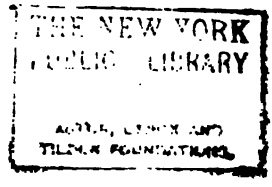
they, as Aztec or Toltec gods, were supposed to have had. In many places there are shrines erected to these saints of the Church who are supposed to have power over the rain. It has been proven that, in most instances, in Aztec times, a temple existed on the same spot dedicated to the goddess of the rains or mists, as the case might be.

These schemes of miraculous appearances upon scenes already sacred made the transition from the native ceremonies to the ritual of the Catholic Church easy to a people who were accustomed to outward show and symbolism. The striking ceremonies of the Catholic Church, as practised in Mexico, and its impressive services in an unknown tongue, seemed in harmony with the rites of the Aztecs, and it was not hard for Cortez to force his religion upon the simple and superstitious mind of the poor, conquered Indian, who was more interested in form than sentiment. The religion of the Roman Church in Mexico is not free from pagan features even to this day. As one writer expresses it "paganism was baptized, Christianity paganized." Outward display means more than spirituality and piety with the ignorant who constitute a very large proportion of the population.

One can still recognize in the rites of the Catholic Church, as practised to-day in Mexico, a tinge of the Aztec worship. A noted French Catholic prelate, Abbe Domenech, in 1867 wrote of that church as follows: "Mexican faith is a dead faith. The abuse of external ceremonies, the facility of reconciling the devil with God, the absence of internal exercise of piety, have killed the faith in Mexico. The idolatrous character of Mexican Catholicism is a fact well known to all travellers. The worship of saints and madonnas so absorbs the devotion of the people that little time is left to think about God. The Indians go to hear mass with their poultry and vegetables, which they are carrying to market. The gobble of the turkeys, the crowing of the cocks, the mewing of the cats, the chirping of the birds in their nests in the ceiling, and the flea-bites rendered meditation impossible to me, unaccustomed to live in such a menagerie."

In remote caves of mountain regions it is claimed, and, I believe, truthfully, that the ancient deities are still worshipped. It is no infrequent occurrence to see a bouquet of flowers before the image of the virgin in the churches or wayside shrines. Sometimes even offerings of wheat or fruits are found, the gift of some

WAYSIDE SHRINE WITH AN OFFERING OF FLOWERS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poor peon in whose mind the conception of the Saviour and his mission on earth is very vague. Several writers assert that they have personally seen Indians on their way to the mountains to sacrifice lambs, chickens and flowers to their gods, thus proving that the grosser forms of paganism have not been stamped out entirely. The priests, of course, do not approve of this, and try in every way to stop these practices, but without success.

The Catholic Church used to be all-powerful in Mexico. It held the wealth and the learning, and the priests preyed upon the people as well as prayed for them. They were taxed to the utmost, and " Pay or pray " was the motto affixed to the cross by the priests. Rich men gave freely of their substance. Poor peons — and they are vastly in the majority — went clothed in rags that the Church might be benefited. The favourite method was by the sale of indulgences. General Thompson, United States Minister to Mexico in 1845, wrote as follows: " As a means of raising money, I would not give the single institution of the Catholic religion (in Mexico) of masses and indulgences for the benefit of the souls of the dead for the power of taxation possessed by any government. I remember that my washerwoman once asked me to lend her two

dollars. I asked her what she wanted with it. She told me that there was a particular mass to be said on that day which relieved the souls in purgatory from ten thousand years' torture and that she wished to secure the benefit for her mother." It is like the harangue that so aroused Martin Luther: "The very moment the money clicks on the bottom of this chest the soul escapes from purgatory and flies to Heaven! Bring your money, bring money, bring money!"

Shrines and chapels were so numerous that the true believer passed through the streets with head uncovered and hat in hand, for fear that he might pass one unobserved and not remove his head covering as piety demanded. During the latter years of Spanish rule in Mexico, the Church became so enormously rich that it was reported to have in its possession one-third of all the wealth in Mexico. In addition to the power the Church naturally held, this immense wealth gave its leaders great prestige in governmental affairs, for wealth everywhere commands power and respect among those in authority. At one time the clergy held property to the value of about $180,000,000, yielding an annual income of $12,000,000, according to relia-

AN OLD CHURCH

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ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

ble authorities. Some have estimated the wealth at more than $600,000,000.

It had secured control not only of the wealth, but also much of the best agricultural land within the republic, owning eight hundred *haciendas* and more than twenty-two thousand city lots. All this was tied up and became useless and non-productive. The Church used its great influence to oppose all progress. The opposition finally broke forth, and the immense wealth of convents, shrines and monasteries was poured forth with lavish hand in what the Church considered a holy war against heretical ideas and persons. Reformers set envious eyes upon this property, and numerous attempts were made to dispossess the Church of it. An edict aimed at the power of the Church was issued by Commonfort in 1857, but the Indian reformer and president, Juarez, was the first to actually accomplish the separation of church and state several years later. The establishment of the empire with Maximilian as Emperor was simply a reaction, and an attempt to establish a government in which the interests of the Church would again be paramount. It is not much wonder that the native population yielded so readily to the overthrow of the priestly power. In accomplishing the complete

over-throw of church and state, Mexico only did what Italy did a few years later, and what France is endeavouring to do at the present time. Even in Spain, the handwriting on the walls seems to point to the same ultimate result. And yet it is strange to see a nation so rigidly and even unmercifully regulating a church to which ninety-five per cent. of the people belong.

The reactionary movement on the part of the Church under the guise of French intervention failed. The reform anti-clerical movement prevailed once more, even though opposed by the enormous wealth of the Church. The greater portion of the property once owned by the Church has been lost. The country abounds in ruined churches and convents. The law went so far as to prohibit the Church from holding the title to property, and if it wished to own property, it must be in the names of individuals. Priests were forbidden, under penalty of fine and imprisonment, to appear in the streets in their clerical dress. Religious processions outside the walls of the church, or churchyard, were prohibited. Civil ceremonies were made obligatory to render a marriage valid. Sisters of Charity and the Jesuits were sent out of the country, and even the ringing of bells was regu-

lated by law. It has now lost not only its property but its prestige as well.

The property was confiscated, or "denounced," and sold for beggarly sums in numerous instances. Many hotels are now located in former churches or convents, and schools and barracks innumerable occupy former homes of nuns. Even the famous prison of Belem in the City of Mexico, where more than three thousand offenders (most of them justly no doubt) have been incarcerated at times, was the old convent of that name; and the military prison, Santiago de Tlalteloco, was one of the oldest churches in Mexico, having been founded by the first viceroy. Protestant services are held in a number of places that were former Catholic churches, the buildings having been purchased by these organizations, or the use of them granted by the authorities. The rich silver plate and the altar rails were looted from the sacred edifices, or were sold for small sums by the officers.

For many years Mexico has thus gone along the line of reform. The ambition of the Church has been held in check but not killed. They are regaining some of their former power, and recovering much of their former property, so it is

claimed by good authority.[1] The average Mexican is superstitious. He is boastful and bold in times of peace, but craven when the time of trial comes. Consequently, when sick and about to die, he will send for the priest, no matter how he may have fought the Church when in health. The priests, or some of them at least, claiming that the Catholic Church, as the chosen of the Lord, has a lien on all earthly goods, refuse to administer the sacrament without some restitution. If the dying man owns a confiscated church property, he must restore its value before he can get a clear title to a home in Heaven. With the persistence characteristic of the Mexican Catholic priests, they are ferreting out their former property and again accumulating wealth for their beloved Church. Their fees are utterly out of proportion to the earning capacity of the people. Marriage costs $14.00, baptism $2.25 and plain mass $6.00. Many of the poor peons are obliged to forego the services of the Church because of these high charges, for all services must be paid in advance.

They are also openly disregarding the established laws in some of the restrictions imposed. I travelled for two days on the railroad with the

[1] F. A. Ober in "Travels in Mexico."

Bishop of Tehuantepec who wore his purple robes of office all the time. At nearly every station priests met him, and he was given a continuous ovation. A few months ago, according to a Mexican periodical, a well known priest, in defiance of the law which prohibits public religious processions, authorized such a procession, and blessed at the altar those who arrived with it. In many of the more remote districts the law requiring marriage ceremonies to be made by civil authorities is completely disregarded. The priests tell the people that the religious ceremony is all that is necessary. Although the Church upholds such marriages, in law they are absolutely null and void, and it is a deceit upon the contracting parties. Some priests go so far as to tell their people that the civil marriage is positively impious. And yet nothing is done to punish the above violations of the established laws. The government probably does not consider that these infractions of the strict letter of the law have reached a serious phase.

If the Roman Church of Mexico to-day, with its wealth confiscated, its public voice muzzled, its political powers annulled, has still power so that it can openly violate some of the fundamental laws of the country, we can have some

faint idea of its power when it ruled the country with an iron hand. Those who see trouble ahead because of the avariciousness of some of the clergy, are fond of quoting the old Spanish proverb "The devil lurks behind the cross." Nevertheless, I believe that the clergy in Mexico to-day are superior to those who served prior to the change in status. Many of them are noble men striving to uplift the people and aid the government in its campaign for the enlightenment of the masses. The strife has purified them and they think less of the perquisites than the duties of their office. The well meaning priest no doubt suffers for the sins of his predecessors as well as those of his contemporaries who are blinded by the past glory of the Church. The Church as an institution is probably to some extent the victim of the ignorance and fanatical zeal of its early founders in Mexico. The Church will thrive far more when placed on the same footing as all churches are in the United States, and people and priest accept that condition. As one prominent American priest has recently said in commenting on the struggle in France: "Everywhere that church and state are united, the church is in bondage. Nowhere is the church so free and untrammelled, or so progressive, as in the United States."

The churches in all the cities are numerous and their capacity far greater than the number of those attending. Puebla, the City of the Angels, so called because of the many miraculous visits of the angels who even, on their first visit, measured off the city and fixed the site of some churches, is called the city of churches as it has the greatest number in proportion to the population of any city in the republic, many of them being erected in honour of the various angelic visitations. The City of Mexico contains the largest and most pretentious church building in the new world — the cathedral. It is also one of the largest church edifices in the world. This grand cathedral begun in 1573 was ready for service about three-quarters of a century later but the towers were not completed until 1791. It is four hundred and twenty-six feet long and almost two hundred feet wide with walls of great thickness, and reaches a height of one hundred and seventy-five feet in the dome. The towers are a little more than two hundred feet high. Then adjoining this building is another church, the Sagrario Metropolitano, which, to all appearances, is a part of the main structure, although of an entirely different and less beautiful style of architecture.

Within these two edifices were concentrated for centuries the pomp and ceremony of the Church of Rome and within their walls much of Mexico's history was made. It is still the headquarters of the church party while across the plaza is the National Palace, the official home of the government which conquered in the long struggle between the two forces. The estimated cost of the cathedral is $2,000,000, but that represents only a fraction of the actual cost if the labour is figured at a fair rate and the material had all been purchased at market value. There are some paintings by famous artists on the walls and dome. A balustrade surrounds the choir which is made of composite metal of gold, silver and copper and is so valuable that an offer of a speculative American to replace it with one of equal weight in solid silver was refused. Within the walls there are fourteen chapels dedicated to the various saints, and candles are kept constantly burning before the images, and in these chapels are kept many gruesome relics of these same saints. The remains of many of the former viceroys and some of the other noted men in Mexican history lie buried here. This, the greatest church in the western world, is also built on the foundations of the greatest pagan temple of the continent — the imposing

Teocalli of the Aztecs. From the top of the towers we can look upon the same valley that Cortez viewed when Montezuma took him by the hand after ascending the great altar, and pointed out the various places of interest. The lakes have receded, the architecture is different, but our admiring eyes see the same majestic hills on every side.

Listening to the bells in the towers of this cathedral, once so powerful, one, who is a "dreamer of dreams," can almost imagine them lamenting the changed times in the words of the last poem written by the poet Longfellow:

"Is then the old faith dead,"
They say, "and in its stead
Is some new faith proclaimed,
That we are forced to remain
Naked to sun and rain,
Unsheltered and ashamed?

"Oh bring us back once more
The vanished days of yore,
When the world with faith was filled;
Bring back the fervid zeal,
The hearts of fire and steel,
The hands that believe and build.

"Then from our tower again
We will send over land and main
Our voices of command,

Like exiled kings who return
To their thrones, and the people learn
That the Priest is lord of the land!"

The very first movement on the part of Protestant organizations to evangelize Mexico was made by the American Bible Society when they sent out one of their representative with the American army in 1846. This man distributed several thousand copies of the scriptures between Vera Cruz and the capital which afterwards bore fruit. A few years later a woman, Miss Matilda Rankin, who had been engaged in missionary work in Texas, crossed over the border and held services in Monterey. In 1862 a Baptist missionary, Rev. James Hickey, also began work in Monterey. However, no organized effort was made by Protestant bodies until the years from 1869 to 1880, when missionaries were sent by the following denominations: Protestant Episcopal, Methodist Episcopal, Methodist Episcopal South, Presbyterian, Baptist, Christian and Congregational. Bishop H. C. Riley obtained an old church for the use of the Protestant Episcopal Church and Rev. William Butler purchased a part of the convent of San Francisco, in the heart of the city, for the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Dios y libertad had been the watchword of

the reform movement, but it had not been put into practice until the time of President Juarez, who encouraged mission work, and exerted himself to protect the missionaries from fanatics. However frequent attacks upon these workers were made in provincial towns and one foreign missionary, Rev. J. L. Stephens, of the Congregational Church, was slain at Ahualuco in 1874. A number of native converts and preachers have met with serious, and even fatal injuries, but no other Americans have been killed. President Diaz has also encouraged these ministers when they were downhearted. Rev. William Butler quotes an interview which several missionaries had with him in which the President expressed himself as follows: "I have seen this land as none of you ever saw it, in degradation, with everything in the line of toleration and freedom to learn. I have watched its rise and progress to a better condition. We are not yet all we ought to be and hope to be; but we are not what we once were; we have risen as a people, and are now rising faster than ever. My advice is, do not be discouraged. Keep on with your work, avoiding topics of irritation and preaching your gospel in its own spirit." The president has no warmer supporters than the

Protestant missionaries and their little bands of adherents.

Their numbers to-day after thirty years of aggressive work seem small, as the ten Protestant denominations who maintain missions in Mexico only claim about twenty-five thousand members, or about one hundred thousand adherents including those who attend the Sunday-school and other services. The Presbyterians are working in fourteen different states. They have fifty organized churches and two hundred and twenty-two outstations which are served by twenty-one foreign missionaries and one hundred and one native workers. The Methodist Episcopal Church has twenty-nine missionaries in the field and one hundred and twenty-two native workers, and is holding services at more than a hundred different places. The various denominations have divided up the field and are working together in harmony. The Methodists, for instance, are working in Guanajuato, Leon, Pachuca, Puebla, Silao, and Oaxaca. The Presbyterians have centred their efforts in Aguas Calientes, Zacatecas, Saltillo, San Luis Potosi and Jalapa. All denominations have missions in the City of Mexico. The Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists have their own publishing houses and

issue periodicals and a great deal of printed matter in Spanish. There are in all about two hundred and fifty foreign missionaries in Mexico serving about seven hundred congregations. Many of these workers are medical missionaries who are doing a vast amount of good, and others are teachers who are instructing the youth. The Protestant bodies own property in Mexico valued at nearly two million dollars.

An era of at least tolerance toward Protestants is dawning in this land, and religious liberty is an actual fact. The Young Men's Christian Association has a strong organization in the capital. Vice-President Corral is the honorary president, and President Diaz himself has honoured it with his presence. The President and his cabinet have also attended some special memorial services in the Protestant churches. This may seem a small thing, but a quarter of a century ago it would have been incredible. Some of the broad-minded Catholic clergy are even displaying a kindlier feeling toward the Protestant workers. It may not be many years before Catholic clergy and Protestant ministers may unite together in working for a common cause — the betterment of the morals and conditions of the people.

CHAPTER XVIII

PASSING OF THE LAWLESS

A RUDE wooden cross set up in a pile of stones is one of the striking features of Mexican landscape that is frequently seen. As the train whirls along through a narrow pass, high up on the mountain sides the cross is seen outlined against the sky; or, if you are pursuing your journey by horse or mule, in the remote districts away from the railways, your reverie is suddenly interrupted by coming upon one of these silent sentinels unawares. These crosses are mute reminders of an age that is passing away. Each one marks the spot where a murder has taken place in times past. It is an appeal for the good Catholic to mutter a prayer for the soul of the murdered one, who was thus without preparation thrust into the world beyond. There was a time, and that not more than a generation ago, when the murderous and lawless classes were numerous in Mexico. The Mexican bandit was so much feared, that, even to this

day, some hesitate to travel in that country, and many more make walking arsenals of themselves before turning their faces toward our southern neighbour.

If the traditionary history that has come down to us is to be believed, these robber clans can trace their lineage back to the peregrinating merchants of the Aztecs, and Toltecs. The rich merchant of those days travelled over the country visiting the various cities with his wares. For self protection they were obliged to carry with them a large force of armed retainers. This knowledge of their own power led them to violence. If, for any reason, these merchants became angered at a town, or, if the people refused to trade with them, they would attack it, pillage it and carry off the inhabitants to be sold as slaves in other remote places, or hold them for ransom. This course generally proved far more remunerative than the more prosaic occupation of barter and trade. It was indeed a strong town in those days that could afford to refuse to trade with some of the powerful merchants. If one trader was not strong enough himself, he could easily enlist the assistance of another of his class, as the loot and slaves would be sufficient to remunerate both very well for the undertaking.

Later came the freebooters, who, in early Spanish days, had things very much their own way. Although many of these were well known, they would visit the cities armed to the teeth and no one would dare to molest them. It is even claimed, and with good reason, that many officials were in league with these knights of the road, and gave them information, and assisted them in their plans to waylay wealthy inhabitants. So long as the outlaws did not interfere with matters of government, their immunity was practically secure. There is one city in the northern part of Mexico named Catorce, the Spanish numeral for fourteen, because, for a long time, it was the stronghold of fourteen of the boldest, bravest and worst bandits that Mexico ever produced, who terrorized the country round about and could not be captured or subdued.

After independence, came a series of revolutions and uprisings for more than a half century. The bandits then became guerillas, fighting on whichever side offered the greatest advantage. They would loot a church, or rob the hacienda of some wealthy landowner, with equal cheerfulness. The place or person robbed depended upon whether the guerillas were enlisted in the cause of the clericals, or anti-clericals. By rea-

son of the many turmoils and fights that took place, these guerillas became a numerous and powerful class with their rendezvous in the mountains, which, in no part of Mexico, are far distant. Before the advent of the railroads and telegraph it was a difficult matter to cope with these robber bands in Mexico because roads were lacking, and their haunts were almost inaccessible. This was one of the first problems attacked by President Diaz when he came into power, and he did it with the boldness, originality and dash for which he was noted.

This new leader found the army a disorganized band of guerillas led by a few men, not always over-scrupulous, and many parts of the country overrun by bands of outlaws with whom the local authorities were utterly unable to cope. Having some veteran troops after his many campaigns, Diaz sent them after the bandits whenever opportunity afforded. They were hunted and trailed into their mountain fastnesses. The soldiers were instructed never to take captives. A little heap of fresh dirt, or a few stones, marked the place where a living and breathing bandit had once stood. This war of extermination made welcome to many the proposition of Diaz. This was that he would furnish employment to those outlaws who should

surrender, and would grant to them protection. The President being known as a man of his word, this proclamation had its effect and large numbers formerly under the ban of law, surrendered.

From this class of men the first companies of *rurales* were formed. Finding it was more profitable, or at least safer, to be in favour with this aggressive government than under its ban, they willingly entered this service. These men were brave and thoroughly familiar with all the mountain retreats and haunts of the outlaw bands. They hunted down their former confederates until a live bandit was a rare specimen. Travelling once more became secure, and now there are few places in Mexico where it is not perfectly safe for a traveller to journey. The companies of rurales, of which there are many, form one of the most effective forces for preserving order ever devised by any government. Like the famous *guardia civil* of Spain, the rurales patrol the remote mountain trails and great plains of the central plateaus, and are in reality a body of rural police. Many a lonely traveller has been made glad by the sight of the gray uniform of this band. They are generally kind hearted, and will do everything in their power for a foreigner. Their uniform

A *RURALE*

is the typical riding costume of the country, and differs from the French appearance of the uniforms of the regular army. They are fine horsemen, expert in the use of pistol and carbine, and form one of the most picturesque cavalry bodies in the world.

There is no sickly sentimentality wasted upon law breakers, and the highwayman, or robber, gets little sympathy. Few criminals get a second opportunity to commit their outrages through the pardoning process. The old *ley fuga*, or law of attempted escape, which was in force under Spanish rule, under which Indians or slaves attempting to flee were shot, was revived. Orders were promulgated to shoot highwaymen on sight, and all other prisoners if escape was attempted. Few attempts to escape are now made by prisoners, for the guards have a reckless way of sending bullets after fleeing prisoners, so that no chains are needed to secure them. The bullets are swift and any one in custody, even though held as a witness, will be followed by the quick, death-dealing messengers, if an attempt to escape is made. Gangs of convicts may be seen in various places working on the streets, or on the roads, under military guard but without shackle. The only report necessary in the event a prisoner is killed is

that he attempted to escape. It may be a harsh proceeding, but it saves the state a great deal of money, and conviction is sure. Furthermore, it relieves judge, jury and prison officials of much hard work and annoyance.

A few years ago the Mexican army consisted of a few thousand irregular, nondescript soldiers so common in Spanish-American countries. Such men it was who placed Porfirio Diaz in power in 1876, the same year that we were celebrating the first centennial of our independence. In promoting peace this man of Mexico has not forgotten the arts of war. The army has been improved until it has ceased to be made up of the comic-opera type of the barefooted, half-naked soldier, and is now a well fed, well equipped, and well clothed organization to which Mexicans can point with pride. To the American eye the soldiers appear rather indifferent and insignificant, because of their smaller stature and brown skin, which reveals the fact that the regular soldier is generally drawn from the lower classes of Mexicans.

Although Mexico might be termed a military nation, as military service is made obligatory by the law of the country, yet in times of peace this service is not enforced. It is said that the majority of the enlistments are not even volun-

tary, but that recruits are drawn from the ranks of those who are persistent law breakers — those guilty of petty criminal offences which we would term misdemeanours. Many of these peon soldiers who before enlistment never knew what it was to have regular meals and wear clean clothes every day, leave the service after a few years much better citizens, and posessing a better education, for schools are maintained in connection with all the barracks where instruction is given in reading, writing and mathematics. The pay is about forty cents per day, in Mexican silver, and is good pay for that country when you take into consideration the fact that the soldier has absolutely no expenses except for such luxuries as he may want.

The standing army of Mexico consists of thirty thousand men and three thousand two hundred officers. Of this number the infantry number twenty-two thousand six hundred, cavalry five thousand five hundred, artillery two thousand, engineers and other branches of the service making up the remainder. This gives a soldier for every five hundred inhabitants, as compared with one for every fifteen hundred inhabitants in the United States. Both infantry and cavalry are equipped with the Spanish Mauser rifles and carbines. The head-

quarters of the army are in the City of Mexico, and several battalions of infantry and regiments of cavalry are stationed there at all times. The country is divided into a number of districts, at the headquarters of each of which are stationed large bodies of troops. Nearly every town of any size has a *commandancia* where a few troops are quartered. This general distribution of the military forces has been made with a prudent foresight in order to prevent any local uprising.

In addition to the regular standing army, there are a number of armed forces which would swell the number of available troops in time of war. First and foremost are the *Rurales* who number about three thousand five hundred by actual count, but double that number in effectiveness. The Fiscal Guards number about one thousand and are in the revenue service. The police of the states and cities are compelled to undergo military drill also, and could be drafted into the army as trained soldiers. These several forces would constitute another army almost equal in number to the regular standing army. Militia organizations have been provided for by law similar to those organizations in our own country, but as yet little has been done. When these plans are perfected, it is

ARMY HEADQUARTERS, CITY OF MEXICO

designed to have the total war footing number a force of one hundred and fifty thousand drilled and disciplined men.

The President of Mexico is the commander-in-chief of the army and navy. The " West Point of Mexico " is located next to the presidential residence and is called the Chapultepec Military Academy. It was founded in 1824. During the war of 1847 Chapultepec was successfully stormed by the American forces, but heroically defended by the cadets. A monument now stands at the foot of the hill in memory of those cadets who fell in that engagement, and a graceful tribute is paid to the memory of those youthful patriots on each fourth of July, when wreaths are placed on the monument by the American residents of the capital at the same time that they decorate the graves of American soldiers who are buried near the city. This school now ranks high as a military school, and more than one-third of the commissioned officers of the army are graduates of this institution. The graduate leaves this school with the rank of lieutenant. The student must bind himself to serve seven years in the army, if he takes the technical courses, and, if he is discharged, or refuses to serve, must repay to the government $16 for each month he

remained in the academy. If war should occur, all retired graduates would be compelled to report for service.

Not a generation ago the capital itself was the home of innumerable thieves. In fact, a goodly percentage of the people were either thieves, robbers or beggars. These were drawn from the *mestizo* class, and formed a picturesque but filthy group of blackguards. They would make love to any one's pocket, and argue with one another at the point of a long, sharp knife. Each one carried a knife and revolver. "Unfortunate men, women and children, the legitimate heritage of wrong, oppression and misgovernment, thronged the streets begging in daytime, and committing petty robberies by night. They slept by hundreds in doorways, on benches in public parks, in ruined houses, and in the dirtiest of apartments. A score or more of filthy beings of all ages and both sexes would sleep together in one small room reeking with the miasma that rose from sewers and unclean cobble-stone pavements."

Vice was the natural outcome of such conditions. All natural feelings of delicacy and shame were deadened. Morality was unknown, and they lived like animals rather than human beings. Marriages were unthought of, and

children knew not their parents, for even their mothers deserted them. If not deserted, they were frequently maimed and turned out into the street to beg. Pulque and mescal added its touch to the picture. Disfiguring diseases were added, and the name *leperos* attached to them. Brantz Mayer, a writer on Mexico, has given the following definition of the *lepero*. "Blacken a man in the sun, let his hair grow long and tangled and become filled with vermin; let him plod about the streets in all kinds of dirt for years, and never know the use of a brush, or towel, or water, even, except in storms; let him put on a pair of leather breeches at twenty and wear them until forty without change or ablution; and over all place a torn and blackened hat and a tattered blanket begrimed with abominations; let him have wild eyes and shining teeth, features pinched by famine into sharpness, and breast bared and browned; combine all these in your imagination and you have a recipe for a Mexican *lepero*."

These *leperos* were the thieving class. They frequented all parts of the city. Even the churches were not exempt and you were just as likely to be robbed by some apparently devout, kneeling worshipper saying his *ave marias* in a sacred edifice as on the street. In the less fre-

quented streets many hold-ups took place, and the bodies of those murdered would be found on the pavement in the morning. It was hardly safe to move about the street after night had fallen. The thieves' market was well known and did a thriving business. Here were the pawnbrokers who did a profitable business acting as " fences " for the thieves. Many instances are told by foreigners who were robbed, and, in a few hours, found their property exposed for sale in this market. They were obliged to pay considerable sums to recover their own property.

All these types are now disappearing, and even the beggars are less numerous. The former lawless *leperos* are now seen in the poor venders of lottery tickets who crowd every public place. Begging is forbidden in most parts of the city. Vice has not disappeared, it is true, nor has it in American cities. The poor peon still gets intoxicated and is dirty, but he is more law-abiding than formerly. Conditions, which are the result of neglect and misrule of centuries, can only be overcome entirely by education, immigration and the infusion of saner ideas, and this is a gradual process. A whole city, or a whole country, can not be plowed up and re-sown in a season, as the corn fields of

last year were transformed into the waving fields of golden grain this year. A generation is even too short a time. The change actually wrought has been almost a miracle. Work can now be had by all who are willing to work, and the government is making strenuous efforts to get rid of the idle classes. It is a long and hard task, but another decade under present conditions will work wonders.

An excellent police system is found in the capital and all the other cities. A policeman is not hard to find. One is stationed at nearly every street intersection. During the day he stands like a statue, occasionally leaning against a door post. At night the policeman brings a lantern and a blanket, and sets the lantern in the centre of the crossing, while he stands beside it or not far away. The joker says the lantern is intended to aid the thief in avoiding the officer of the law. Sometimes after the people quit passing, he may lean up against a building and fall asleep, but you can locate his vicinity by the lantern. As the windows are all heavily barred, and the doors are heavy oaken affairs that it would take a stick of dynamite to move, and as fires are infrequent, his lot is not a very hard one. The police are very numerous, however, because the government wants to keep in-

formed in order that a revolutionary movement may not gain any headway. One seldom hears of knock-downs now, and pocket picking is about the only kind of robbery.

These guardians of the peace are generally called *serenos*. This name clings to them from the old Spanish watchman whose duty it was to call out the time of the night and state of the weather. As this was usually clear, the watchman would say "*tiempo sereno*" meaning "weather clear." From the frequent repetition of this term the watchmen were dubbed *serenos*. The Mexican *sereno* is generally a faithful and reliable official and is obliging to a stranger. They have made the streets in the City of Mexico as safe as in Paris. The senses of sight and smell may be offended more often, but purse and life are just as secure.

CHAPTER XIX

THE STORY OF THE REPUBLIC

THERE is a strange fascination about the history of Mexico, and no one can thoroughly understand the country or the people without a little insight into those stirring events that preceded the establishment of the present republic. With the increasing friendly regard and the growing commercial intercourse between the two countries, a few pages devoted to this subject will not be amiss; and the prospective traveller, as well as the one who has already travelled in that country, will find an additional interest in Mexico and the Mexicans.

However we may feel inclined to criticize Cortez, the fact remains that he thoroughly subjugated the country, and presented to Spain the fairest jewel of her domain. Having been made the first governor of New Spain, he was too busy with fresh conquests and the task of keeping order to make a successful ruler. In order to reform the various abuses that had grown up,

and represent in every way possible the person of the king, King Charles V sent the first viceroy in the autumn of 1535. This first of a long line of viceroys, reaching down to the year 1821, was named Antonio de Mendoza, himself of noble descent, a man of ability, and one who had at heart the best interests of the colonists and the welfare of the Indians. The latter had been subjected to many humiliations and hardships all of which were removed by him, and they were encouraged in the cultivation of the lands.

The colonists themselves were a source of great trouble for they were mostly adventurers and were not, like the early American colonists, men who were seeking religious liberty. The arm of the church was stretched just as strongly in new Spain as in the land of their birth, and to the religious orders was due in great measure the firm foundation upon which the Spanish government was established. During the rule of this man and his successor, Velasco, the country prospered, agriculture was stimulated and a number of industries suitable to the climate of the country encouraged.

At the close of the sixteenth century, Spain underwent great changes. The line of able rulers had passed away, and the government

fell into the hands of profligates who were favourites of the reigning sovereign. The line of viceroys continued in rotation, and most of them were fair men who probably governed the best they knew how, but their knowledge on that subject was not very great. They were poor rulers when compared with the first two above mentioned. The church retained its firm grasp. As one writer has put it, during the first century of Spanish rule the church was a blessing to the country, during the second an indifferent quantity and during the third an actual menace. The inquisition — that terrible institution — had been established in Mexico as early as 1570. The first *auto-da-fe* was celebrated in 1574, when "there perished twenty-one pestilent Lutherans." Indians were exempt from this institution and it was only aimed at heretics of other nations. Large numbers were burned in the capital and other cities. In Puebla, the old house of the inquisition was remodelled within the last half-century, and a number of walled-up cells opened in which skeletons were found — no doubt remains of victims who had been buried alive. The inquisition was not formally abolished until the beginning of the last century, just prior to the beginning of the movement for independence. Even this con-

cession, and the promise of correcting other abuses, did not stop the growing discontent, for generations had grown up who had few ties linking them to the mother country; who had intermarried with native races; and who would be satisfied with nothing but complete severance of their relations.

The beginning of the nineteenth century opened with a feeling of unrest in all European nations and their colonies. When Napoleon overturned monarchies, the idea of the divine right of kings received a shock. Among the countries thus affected was Spain, which had dropped down from the high pedestal it had formerly occupied. The eyes of the people of Mexico were opened by the events in Europe, and also by the successful revolution of the American colonies. All the offices of profit in Mexico were held by Spaniards, and the policy of the mother country toward her dependents was well expressed by one of the viceroys as follows: "Let the people of these dominions learn once for all that they were born to be silent and to obey, and not to discuss nor to have opinions in political affairs." The spirit of revolution and liberty was in the air and restraint became more and more galling. The events leading to the independence of Mexico,

and the stirring times subsequent thereto, can best be treated by a glance at the men who were in the limelight during the various periods.

When Miguel Hidalgo, curate of the little village of Dolores, sounded the "grito" of independence by ringing the bell of the parish church early on the morning of the 16th of September, 1810, a struggle for independence was started that lasted for eleven years, and during which much of the soil of Mexico was crimsoned with the blood of those slain in battle or executed by the authorities as traitors. At the outset no people were less prepared for such a contest. They knew nothing of military tactics; their weapons were primitive and their leaders were without military training. No more righteous cause ever existed for rebellion against tyranny and usurpation. The first two leaders were consecrated representatives of the church that had assisted a despotic government in bringing about such an unfortunate state of affairs. These two martyrs who were excommunicated by the church, and executed by the government as traitors, are now honoured with resting places in sacred ground by a grateful nation.

The first revolt was headed by a picture of the patron saint of the country, and shouts of

" Viva Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe " and " Viva la Independencia " were intermingled. Hidalgo and his compatriots were compelled to begin their movement before thoroughly prepared, because their plans had been discovered and betrayed to the government. On the morning of the memorable day above mentioned, Hidalgo addressed the people from the pulpit of the church where he had so often celebrated mass, and, leading his followers forth, released the prisoners in the town, and captured the principal Spaniards. Soon afterwards this priest-warrior patriot, who had been named Captain-General, followed by a few hundred of human beings (they can not be called soldiers), marched forth to conquer Mexico and give " death to the Spaniards."

It was a motley crowd armed with stones, lances, *machetes,* arrows, clubs and swords, whose numbers and enthusiasm were ever increasing as they marched across the country without meeting resistance. San Miguel and Celaya, Irapuato and Querétero, yielded, and the army which by this time numbered tens of thousands marched towards Guanajuato. The governor of that province assembled the terror-stricken populace in the now famous Alhondiga de Granaditas, built for storing grain but now a

prison, as noted in that city as the Bastille of Paris. Upon a refusal to surrender, Hidalgo and his followers attacked this fortress with fanatical zeal, and captured it by the mere force of numbers. This supplied him with plenty of food and a million dollars in money which furnished the sinews of war.

Terror struck the hearts of the Spaniards and every town yielded to this new leader, who now bore the title of Generalissimo, as the army approached the City of Mexico. One terrible battle occurred at Monte las Cruces and both forces withdrew. Hidalgo — and this was probably his greatest error — retreated, and his fortune immediately turned. The volatile nature of the people asserted itself and his followers deserted by the thousands. He started for the United States, but was betrayed and captured, and was executed at Chihuahua on July 31st, 1811. For ten years his head was suspended by a spike from one of the corners of the Alhondiga de Granaditas, once occupied by him as conqueror, as a warning to revolutionists, but was afterward buried with great ceremony in the cathedral at the capital.

It was around a disciple of Hidalgo that the forces of discontent and patriotism rallied upon the death of their first leader, and that man was

also a priest, Jose Maria Morelas. Of low birth and poor, this man drove mules until thirty years of age before an opportunity presented itself for education to fit himself for the priesthood, which was his ambition. In that time he had acquired the qualities of patience and cool calculation from the animals he drove. A student under Hidalgo, he had imbibed a love for independence, and leaving his church upon the sounding of the "grito," offered his services to the Generalissimo. He was an abler leader than Hidalgo and showed great military skill, winning a series of victories clear across the country from Acapulco, on the Pacific Coast, to Cuautla not far from Vera Cruz. At Cuautla he was besieged for over two months, and then successfully withdrew with all his forces by night. Returning to Acapulco he summoned the first Mexican Congress, which met at Chilpantzingo, a small town near that city. This congress met on the 14th of September, 1813, and on the following day issued its famous declaration of independence, as follows:—

"The Congress of Anahuac, lawfully installed in the city of Chilpantzingo, of North America, solemnly declares, in the presence of God, arbitrator of kingdoms and author of society, who gives and takes away according to the in-

scrutable designs of his providence, that, through the present circumstances of Europe, it has recovered the exercise of its sovereignty, hitherto usurped, its dependence upon the throne of Spain being thus forever disrupted and dissolved."[1]

This congress provided a form of government with a military executive called Generalissimo, and Morelas was elected to this position for life, or "so long as he was worthy." Shortly after this his forces were defeated at Valladolid, now called Morelia, and his power began to wane, though resistance was kept up for some time afterwards with varying success. Spanish troops had arrived, and stronger leaders were in charge of the government forces and the cause of independence looked dark. The plans of Morelas were betrayed to the enemy and he was captured. The ecclesiastical tribunes covered him with ignominy. He was then sentenced to death by the military authorities, and shot in the little village of San Cristobal Ecatepec, near the capital, on December 22d, 1815, dying the death of a hero. This muleteer-priest-warrior was an able leader, an

[1] This citation and some of the other quotations in this chapter, as well as a number of the historical facts, are from the "Story of Mexico," by Susan Hale, published by G. P. Putnam's Sons of London and New York.

honest man and a patriotic citizen. He seemed devoid of personal ambition, although accepting title for the sake of the cause he fought for. He was possessed of restless energy and great piety, for he always made confession before entering battle. To-day, he is second only to Hidalgo in the affections of the people, and worthily fills that position. Over the door of the house once owned by him in Morelia appears the following inscription:—

"Morelas the illustrious
Immortal Hero.
In this house honoured by thy presence
Salute you the grateful people of Morelia."

The revolution was seemingly crushed at the death of Morelas but a few patriots retired to the mountains, and there kept alive for better days the sacred fire of liberty. Guerrero was one of those heroes who showed an unwearying activity, and kept up a constant warfare upon the government forces. The next prominent name in succession among those leaders of the movement for freedom was Agustin de Iturbide, a former active and able officer of the royalist forces, and to whom more than anyone else was due the failure of Morelas. Deserting the cause of Spain, because he thought injustice had been

done him, General Iturbide issued the "Plan of Iguala" on the 20th of February, 1820, composed of three articles: preservation of the Roman Catholic church; independence of Mexico under a monarchical form of government with a prince of the royal house of Spain as ruler; union and equality of Spaniards and Mexicans. From this proclamation his army became known as the army of the three guarantees. His act was full of duplicity, for he had obtained the largest force possible from the Viceroy Apodaca in order to turn them over to the new scheme.

Before the viceroy could recover from his surprise, Iturbide, who had been joined by most of the insurgent leaders, had started on his victorious campaign. Valladolid, Querétero and Puebla succumbed. The viceroy tried by suppressing liberty, and enforcing enlistments in the royal army, to stem the tide but in vain, and he was deposed. O'Donoju, the sixty-fourth and last viceroy, arrived about this time at Vera Cruz, but was intercepted by Iturbide and entered into the treaty of Cordoba in which the independence of Mexico was recognized with a sovereign to be selected from the royal house of Spain, and a provisional Junta formed. Iturbide was selected as president of this Junta, and

made a triumphal entry into the City of Mexico on the 27th of September, 1821. This ended three hundred years of Spanish rule in Mexico. Iturbide had accomplished in a little more than a year, and with little bloodshed, what ten years of strife had failed to do. He can not be classed with Hidalgo and Morelas as a pure patriot, but he has been officially designated as the "Liberator of Mexico."

The rejection of the treaty of Cordoba by the Cortes of Spain gave new impetus to the smouldering ambitions of Iturbide. The second Mexican Congress having been called, Iturbide at a packed session was declared Emperor by a majority of four to one of those voting, but not a constitutional majority, and he took the office as Agustin I. When he was crowned and anointed in the cathedral with much form and solemnity, on the 21st of July, 1822, the ambition of this self-made emperor had reached its full. The saying that uneasy lies the head that wears a crown never had better application than in this instance. Other leaders in the cause of liberty felt that they had been slighted, and every discontented person made common cause against the Emperor. A republic was proclaimed at Vera Cruz in December of the same year by Santa Anna, who was commander

of a regiment stationed there, and he issued a *pronunciamento*. This plan failed, but it encouraged Bravo, Guerrero and other revolutionary leaders, and rebellion sprung up in a number of places. Iturbide had dissolved congress and this increased the dissatisfaction. A more formidable revolt arose, and on March 19th, 1823, Iturbide abdicated without attempting to retain his position by force of arms.

A few weeks later the ex-Emperor left Mexico and sailed for Italy, having been granted an annual sum of $25,000 for his services. He soon went to England and wrote the government from there that the republic was in danger, and he would come back to help fight the battles of his country. He did not know that his death had been decreed by congress, and so he set sail upon his last voyage. When he arrived at Vera Cruz he was captured, and after some delay was executed at Padilla on the 19th of July, 1824, as a traitor, in his forty-first year. His body was buried in a roofless old church and lay there until 1838, when it was removed to the Cathedral.

Opinion is very much divided as to the rank that should be accorded Iturbide. He was able, brave, honest so far as is known, and probably fell a victim to his ambition like many a man

before him. The relative regard in which he is held is shown in the fact that the town which gave both him and his former vanquished foe, Morelas, birth, is now called Morelia, and a state is also named Morelas. In contrast to this there is neither city nor state named after Iturbide, and the famous Iturbide Hotel in the capital city, once his residence, is the only institution perpetuating his name so far as I could learn. The only things accomplished by him during his brief reign were the settlement of the titles by which he and his family should be addressed, the succession to the throne, order of precedence among the dignitaries, allowances of himself and family, and the creation of the Order of Guadalupe to bestow honours upon his followers.

At last a so-called republic was established, and Guadalupe Victoria was inaugurated as the first president on the 10th day of October, 1824, and served until 1828. When the fort of San Juan de Ulua at Vera Cruz lowered its flag, in 1825, the last vestige of Spanish power was gone, and the red and yellow striped banner of the Iberian peninsula was not to be seen on Mexican soil. And Mexico, as then constituted, was a big country, containing almost twice as much territory as to-day. From the end of the

administration of President Victoria until after the death of Maximilian, there was not a year of peace in Mexico. Revolutions, *pronunciamentos,* "plans" and restorations followed each other in quick succession. Generals, presidents and dictators sprang up like mushrooms, and their position was as evanescent. The congress unwisely decreed the expulsion of the Spaniards, and their departure took much of the wealth of the country. Revolutions were an every-day affair. A man in position of authority did not know when his time to be shot might come. A sudden turn of fortune might send him either to the national palace, or before a squad of men with guns aimed at his heart.

A good illustration of this uncertainty of affairs is seen in the treatment and fate of the grim old patriot Guerrero. Born of very low Indian parents he had climbed to the front and borne many of the burdens of the struggle with Spain. He cheerfully yielded his command to the renegade Iturbide, and fought valiantly under that leader for liberty. By a turn of fortune he became the third president in 1829. A few months later he was compelled to flee, but was soon afterwards betrayed and captured at Acapulco. At a farcical trial he was condemned to death as "morally incapable" to

act as president, and shot on the 15th of February, 1831, at Cuilapa. Soon afterwards he was declared a martyr and his body removed to the capital with honours. Two monuments to this martyr now adorn that city, and a state has been named after him. Under his short rule slavery was abolished by statute.

Elections eventually became a farce. The unfortunate habit was acquired of appealing to arms instead of submitting to the result of the ballot. The trouble was that the people had copied the letter, and not the spirit of the American constitution. Liberty was interpreted as license, after their exaggerated ideas of the former. The scheming politicians would hesitate at nothing — revolution or civil war — to attain private ends or personal aggrandizement. A general indolence of character, and the hindrances to the acquirement of property among the masses, made the people more willing to yield to disturbing and designing politicians. They are impetuous by nature, impatient of restraint and easily fired up. The rapid changes in government can be seen when you read that there were five different presidents in each of the years 1846 and 1847, and four in 1855 — not an evidence of tranquillity at least. The two

leading parties constantly at war were the "progresistas" and "retrogrados."

During this period a few prominent names are constantly recurring, and by far the most prominent one is that of the notorious Santa Anna, who, for more than fifty years, occupied a prominent, but not always honourable, place in Mexican affairs. Earlier in life his restless energy was expended in a fairly commendable way, and he fought some battles in defense of the rights of the people. During the war of intervention with France in 1838 he lost his leg in the defense of Vera Cruz. Ever afterwards, when in trouble, he would flourish his severed limb and remind the people how he had been mutilated in the defense of his country, with the effect of restoring himself in public favour. As he grew older his naturally quarrelsome disposition increased, his vanity knew no bounds, and when at the height of his glory, he declared himself dictator and ordered all people to address him as "most serene highness." Never honest except as a matter of policy, his cupidity became more pronounced, until, near the close of the war with the United States, he offered to appoint commissioners and confirm a treaty of peace for the sum of one million dollars. First elected president in 1833, he was

again either chosen to, or assumed the office, in 1839, 1846, 1847, 1853 and 1855, but did not serve long at any time. On one occasion his amputated leg was buried with great ceremony, but afterwards fickle sentiment changed, and the martyr part of this hero was brought forth by the rabble, dragged through the streets of the capital, and insulting epithets heaped upon the former idol.

Santa Anna led the forces against the Texas insurrectionists, and was the man responsible for the Alamo slaughter, when one hundred and forty brave Texans were trapped and slain. Visitors to that place are still shown the stains made by the blood of that brave frontiersman, Davy Crockett, and the cry of " Remember the Alamo " still has potency. This insurrection was soon followed by the war between Mexico and the United States.

Franklin says, there never was a good war nor a bad peace. The United States can not be justified in warring upon Mexico, though the results have perhaps been for the best with both nations. Bancroft does not mince words in his treatment of the subject for he says: " It (the Mexican War) was a premeditated and predetermined affair; it was the result of a deliberately calculated scheme of robbery on the part

of the superior force." The result was a foregone conclusion, for Mexico, torn by internal dissensions, impoverished by the expense of revolutions and official robbery, and with a government changing with every change of the seasons, had neither armies, money nor supplies for such a conflict. The people were used to the smell of powder but were not trained soldiers, and the "generals" were simply a few of the twelve thousand recipients of military commissions that had been distributed by various presidents in the preceding three years. "Plans" promulgated by one party were bombarded with "pronunciamentos" from another. This was the condition of affairs when General Taylor assumed the offensive and fought the battle of Palo Alto.

Mexico might have sued for peace at this time, but no government was in power long enough to negotiate a treaty. A special envoy sent from Washington at the request of one president was refused an audience by a new one, who had usurped the office before his arrival. Generals Taylor and Fremont subdued Northern Mexico, and General Scott later began his memorable march toward the ancient Aztec capital, from Vera Cruz, like Cortez of old. Santa Anna, who had been "recuperating" from public unpopu-

larity at Havana, returned and state after state immediately " pronounced " in his favour. He issued a manifesto assuming the executive control and took the field against the invaders. He first tried to secure $15,000,000 from the Church, but although the priests hated the " northern heretics " they were loth to give up the coin, and little was secured. Vera Cruz fell after two weeks' bombardment, and Puebla yielded to the Americans. Patriotism was finally aroused to save the City of Mexico, but the victories of Chapultepec, Chorubusco and Molino del Rey were followed by the triumphal entry of General Scott into the capital. The treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo ceded to the United States more than six hundred thousand square miles of the Mexican domain, including some of the richest mineral lands of the republic. Disgraced and humiliated as Mexico had been, it was, I believe, the beginning of better things for that country.

Santa Anna went into voluntary exile to Jamaica. The first president after the war, Herrera, actually served the appointed time of his office, but disorder soon began under his successor. " Pronouncing " became popular again, and Santa Anna returned. He was made dictator for a short time by his favourites. This

was the last office held by this selfish politician. He exiled himself to St. Thomas again, and afterwards in Elizabethport, New Jersey. During the second empire he tried to curry favour with both sides, but neither would listen to him. Discouraged and disheartened he lived abroad, until, burdened by the weight of eighty years, he sought and obtained permission to return to the capital, and died on the 20th of June, 1876. Thus passed a man who had lived in stirring times, was most intensely hated, had been president six times, military dictator four times, had upset fifteen governments, had been marked for the assassin's bullet many times; and yet he lived to a ripe old age and died a natural death. However, all his glory had faded, and, blind, lame and infirm, he spent his last days in extreme poverty.

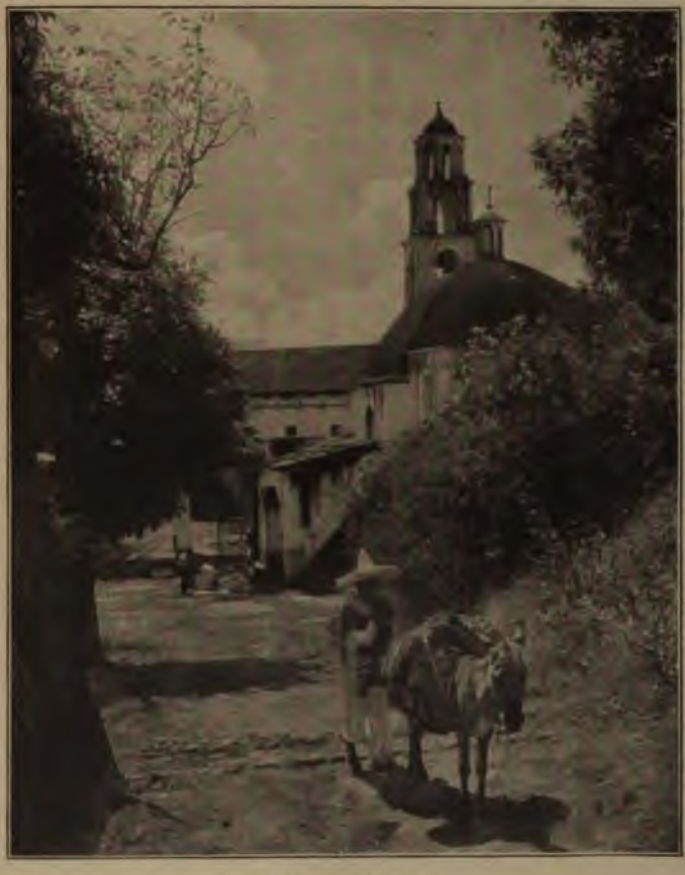
Here is a picture of this man drawn by Rev. William Butler,[1] who visited him about a year before his death: "Santa Anna was living in an obscure street, neglected and forgotten by all parties On entering the apartment we found the old man sitting on a sofa, behind which hung a picture of his wife 'her serene highness, Dolores Tosta de Santa Anna' arrayed as a vice-queen. The magnificence of the painting

[1] "Mexico in Transition" by William Butler.

contrasted sadly with the poverty-stricken aspect of the room and furniture. To him, however, this could make but little difference, as we soon saw that he was totally blind as well as feeble and broken in spirit, with a tendency to mental weakness." He was buried in the cemetery at Guadalupe without honours or recognition by the government, and his remains still rest there. As I gazed upon his tomb I could not help thinking what a contrast between his career and that of the patriots Hidalgo, Morelas, and Juarez.

The early constitution had declared that the Roman Catholic religion should perpetually be the religion of Mexico. Nevertheless a struggle had been growing up between the clericals and liberals for many years with increasing intensity. It finally centred in a struggle over the sequestration of the church property, and became wider and wider until the whole country was involved and divided into two great parties. The liberals were probably just as good Christians as the others but thought the Church had too much wealth.

At this juncture there arose a pure Indian, of lowly parentage, who never saw a school until he was twelve years of age. His name was Benito Juarez. Although ever professing de-



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vout faith, he early espoused the cause of the anti-clerical party. He was banished by Santa Anna and fled to New Orleans, but opinion changed and his sentiments became the popular views. The new constitution of 1857 declared the separation of church and state. Juarez had been elected President of the Supreme Court under Comonfort. The latter was compelled to flee the country and Juarez became president under the constitution, in 1857. Congress passed a law confiscating church property and civil war was begun. Juarez took the field in person and did not reach the capital until three years later. These three years have been called the years of horrors. The liberals were excommunicated by the church, and the papal delegate and several bishops were ordered out of the country in turn by Juarez. Ministerial crises and resignations became chronic. Guerillas and robbers were bold and attacked many aliens, and foreign obligations were unpaid because of the impoverished condition of the country.

Juarez alone remained cool in the midst of all these disturbances. The convention entered into between France, England and Spain for a joint intervention in Mexican affairs on the 31st day of October, 1861, brought new embarrassment to the Indian reformer. Underneath these

acts of the convention the crafty hand of Napoleon can be seen. The man who had accomplished one *coup d' Etat* was a sworn enemy to all republican institutions. The pretext for this intervention was the collection of some money claims and reparation for alleged offences. Spain no doubt looked forward to a little revenge. The Spanish fleet occupied Vera Cruz on the 14th of December, 1861, followed by the other armies. A conference took place at Orizaba with Juarez who acknowledged the money claims, and Spain and England withdrew their forces. The French remained, secretly supported and encouraged by the extreme church party, and advanced to and captured Puebla. Distracted and disheartened by the state of affairs, the prospect of a stable government made the way easy to place Maximilian upon the throne as Emperor of Mexico, and this was done. He and the empress arrived on the 28th of May, 1864. Maximilian was a liberal ruler and the Empress Carlotta won the people by her charming personality and benevolences.

As long as the French forces remained his throne was secure. The prompt and decisive action of Secretary Seward sounded the death knell of Maximilian's ambitions. Napoleon

withdrew his troops, and Maximilian might have easily escaped had he not wavered between ambition and discretion, — the former eventually winning. He met death with dignity and said "May my blood be the last spilt for the welfare of the country."

During all of these years Juarez maintained a semblance of authority and kept a cabinet under appointment although he was finally driven to the American border. Yet he could wait, for he had inherited from his dusky ancestors the qualities of patience, endurance and imperturbability. He also had executive ability and an abundance of good sense. After the execution of Maximilian he made a triumphal entry into Mexico. The country was impoverished. The short empire had added a national debt of $187,000,000. More than one thousand battles and skirmishes had occurred between 1863 and 1867, and a hundred thousand Mexicans had been killed or disabled. The people were still restless and an increasing element began to say that he had been president long enough. He was unmoved, but kept steadily on his way trying to better the condition of the people, improve the finances and bring prosperity to his country. The iron constitution finally gave way and he died on the 19th of July, 1872, beloved

and honoured by his country. He deserves to be called the Washington of his country for the real liberty of a republican form of government began with him. He had prepared the way for the present ruler of Mexico who has so ably brought peace, prosperity and liberty to a country that for centuries had been groping and striving after such a condition.

CHAPTER XX

THE GUIDING HAND

"I SHOULD like to live fifty years to see the result of the seed I have planted," said Porfirio Diaz a number of years ago. It is not within the limit of human possibility that such a boon could be granted this amiable "republican despot" but he had lived long enough to see the good results of the policies established by him for the upbuilding of his country.

Succeeding to a government that had been in the throes of revolution ever since the patriot-priest Hidalgo first proclaimed independence on the 16th of September, 1810, President Diaz at once restored peace to the country that has lasted for thirty years. Inheriting a bankrupt treasury from his predecessors, and a large foreign debt that had on several occasions brought about foreign intervention, he succeeded in placing the finances of the country in a prosperous condition and has accomplished more for Mexico than had been done in three

centuries of Spanish rule. He organized the army along modern lines and established the *rurales* which insured the safety of life and property. Railroads under the wise system of encouragement inaugurated by him have increased from three hundred and fifty miles to thirteen thousand five hundred miles; telegraph lines from four thousand five hundred miles to thirty-five thousand miles; the number of post-offices now number two thousand three hundred and fifty instead of seven hundred and twenty as it was in 1876. Imports and exports have doubled several times, and the annual balance sheet now shows a comfortable surplus instead of a deficit as in former days. All this has been done and old obligations met in spite of the serious loss in exchange due to the depreciation in silver, and the fact that the heavy foreign obligations had to be met in gold purchased with silver at a low and constantly varying valuation.

The life of Porfirio Diaz is fascinating. It savours of the days of knighthood and romance. We are reminded of those heroes of old around whom time has cast a glamour, for he has had adventures as exciting, escapes as miraculous and a life seemingly as charmed as any hero created by the masters of romance, and his life may well be termed "stranger than fiction."

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One is naturally inclined to be rather eulogistic in his treatment of such a character.

The present President of Mexico was born in the city of Oaxaca in an unimposing house on the Street of La Soledad, that is now used as a sugar factory, on the 15th of September, 1830, a day already celebrated in Mexican annals. His father, Captain José Faustini Diaz, was of Spanish descent and followed the occupation of innkeeper, but died when Porfirio was only three years of age. His maternal grandmother was a Mixteca Indian. The church and law were the only two occupations open to an ambitious youth in those days, and this young lad was intended for the former. He chose the law much to the disgust of his relatives but never followed that calling. The fighting blood in him impelled hm to the sanguinary conflicts on the field rather than the bloodless battles in the courts between contending counsel.

About this time the war with the United States broke out and the future president, a youth of seventeen, volunteered but saw no fighting, although he thus early in life showed his genius for organization by forming his fellow-students of the academy into a battalion for the defence of his home city. Benito Juarez, afterwards president, was attracted by this

youth and invited him to read law in his office, which offer was accepted. Thus was begun an association between two men who were destined in later years to occupy such a prominent place in Mexican history. Through the influence of Juarez, the younger man was made assistant librarian and by the aid of the salary attached to this position, and money earned as tutor, he completed his course, and received his law degree.

Politics and war seem to have divided the attention of Diaz from the very first with a preference for the latter in early life. Diaz was a military genius. I can say this in all seriousness. Although he never commanded a large army yet, under his hands, the rawest recruits soon became valuable troops. He is possessed of a personal magnetism and the quality of *simpatica,* (which can not be translated into English) that draws people to him and, when once aroused, they become his enthusiastic partisans. In a land of lethargy and procrastination his movements were quick and decisive, and he soon became noted for night marches and early morning attacks. He never was overcome except by superior forces, and then only after his stores and ammunition were exhausted. Even when beaten and his army captured or

separated, a few days of freedom would again place him at the head of a respectable force ready to take aggressive stand against the enemy. Had he been in command of a hundred thousand men, he would have met the situation with the same tact and ability.

The first of the many political offices held by Diaz was that of Jefe Politico, or mayor, of the little Indian town of Ixtlan when only twenty-five years of age. Here he devoted his time to organizing the Indians into a company of militia, and this little body of soldiers formed a nucleus that proved a great help to him in the troublous times which followed. Later he was made Jefe of Tehuantepec where he showed great administrative ability. Soon afterward, in 1861, he was elected a deputy to congress from Oaxaca, but at that time would not sacrifice the excitement of war for the more prosaic duties of law-making.

Captain Diaz had seen his first military service in the revolts against the notorious Santa Anna, of Alamo fame. He had the courage to sign a remonstrance against this usurper, and was compelled to fly for his life. Later, in the campaigns against Santa Anna, he was so successful that he had become almost a hero in the eyes of his fellow Oaxacans. At the beginning

of the French invasion, the rank of general of a brigade had been conferred upon him at the early age of thirty-two years, and he was assigned to the defense of Puebla under General Zaragoza. It was due to his tactics more than anything else that the way was paved for the great victory of *Cinco de Mayo*, 1862, when an inferior force of Mexicans defeated a numerically larger army of veteran French troops. It was nearly a year later before the armies of the allied French and Austrians, greatly augmented by new arrivals, were able to capture Puebla after a two months' siege, the ammunition of the Mexicans had been exhausted. General Diaz refusal to give *parol* and was made prisoner but escaped after a short confinement.

Because of the approach of the invading armies toward the capital, President Juarez had removed the seat of government to San Luis Potosi. He made General Diaz commander-in-chief of the armies south of the Valley of Mexico. Returning to his favourite haunts in Oaxaca, he soon gathered together an army and some money and marched forth on the offensive. By this time General Diaz had become such a formidable opponent that General Bazaine himself, later of European fame, leader of the French forces, took the field against this young

leader with the determination to crush him. He finally shut him up in Oaxaca and captured that city in 1865. The French general had carefully laid his plans for this campaign, having transported a large number of guns, and was at the head of an army, Diaz claims, of sixteen thousand. The fame of this general and his large force created a panic among the troops of Diaz and his little army had dwindled to a few hundred. General Diaz was captured and taken to Puebla by his captors where he was prisoner for more than seven months in a former house of the Jesuits in that city. His escape is celebrated in Mexican annals, and his own account is as follows, although I have greatly abbreviated it:—

"After taps for silence had been sounded for the night, I went to a room which was roofless and which on that account was used as a yard. I had with me three ropes, wrapped up in canvas, and I threw them onto the roof. I also had another rope, and I succeeded in throwing it around a projecting stone spout which seemed to be sufficiently firm. When I had satisfied myself that the support was sufficient, I climbed up by the rope to the roof. My progress along the roof to the corner of San Roque street, where I had made up my mind to descend, was

attended with much danger, for on the roof of the church a detachment and sentries were stationed to keep watch. Gliding on all-fours I made towards the point where I was to let myself down. I often had to stop to feel my way, for the roof was strewn with many fragments of glass which sounded when touched. Moreover, there were frequent flashes of lightning, which exposed me to being discovered.

" I finally reached the wall of the church. In order to arrive at the corner of the street of San Roque it was necessary to pass through a portion of the edifice which was occupied by the priest in charge of the church, and I was aware that shortly before he had denounced to the court martial some political prisoners who had bored a hole through their place of confinement into his dwelling, and as a consequence they had been shot the next day.

" I let myself down into an upper yard of the priest's house at the moment when a young man who also lived there had come in from the street; he had probably been to the theatre, for he was in gay humour and was humming an air from an operetta. He did not see me as he passed, and I remained quiet until he had entered his room. When I considered that sufficient time had elapsed for him to get into bed, and perhaps to

fall asleep, I climbed to the roof of the convent on the opposite side to that by which I had descended and pushed forward to the corner of the street of San Roque, and I arrived there at last. There is at the corner, in a niche, a statue of St. Vincent Ferrer which I proposed using to fix the rope by which I was to descend. The saint wobbled when touched, but probably there was inside the statue an iron spike to hold it. In any case, in order to be more sure, I adjusted the rope around the pedestal of the statue which seemed to be quite firm. I resolved to alight in a vacant lot which adjoined and which was only fenced in. I did not know that there was a drove of hogs in this yard. As when I began the descent I turned somewhat with my rope, my back struck against the wall, and the impact caused a poniard which I carried at my waist to fall from its sheath among the hogs, probably wounding one of them, for they set up a grunting which grew louder as they saw me descending among them. I had to wait for some time for them to quiet down. I then climbed to the top of the partition separating the lot from the street, but I had at once to bob down again for just at that moment a gendarme was passing on his round, seeing if

the doors were well fastened. When he had retired I sprang into the street."

In a few days he had rallied around him a few faithful followers and captured the small garrison of Tehuitzingo. From this time his career was a succession of victories until the capture and execution of Maximilian. These victories and the firm stand of the United States government re-established republican supremacy. Early in 1867 preparations were made to regain Puebla which city was defended by a force of several thousand French troops. On April 2nd he made a feint with a few hundred men on the convent of "El Carmen" which caused the army of the defenders to be concentrated there. Then a concerted attack followed from several points, and the soldiers of Diaz drove back the hardened troops of the third Napoleon, and the flag of liberty waved over the city in the early dawn. He followed up the fleeing foreigners and a series of engagements followed in which Diaz was victorious. The war was ended by the capture of the City of Mexico after a siege of several assaults.

From boyhood until the close of the empire in 1867, General Diaz had worked against great odds. He was by this time easily the most popular man in Mexico. One party at the gen-

eral elections of that year nominated him for president, but he refused to run against his old friend and patron, President Juarez. He even refused an office and resigned his commission in the army. In search of rest he retired to the place of his birth, and his trip from the capital was a triumphal journey. The citizens of Oaxaca received him with open arms, and presented him with the estate of La Noria near that city. Hither he went with the wife whom he had married by proxy during the war and spent a few years in comparative quiet. In 1871 another presidential election was held. Juarez, who had failed both mentally and physically, had advocated a number of unpopular measures, but was determined to have himself reëlected to office. Diaz was also a candidate. When Juarez was declared elected, the " Porfiristas " declared a revolution with the slogan " less government and more liberty." However Juarez died in a few months and the executive power temporarily fell upon the president of the Supreme Court, Lerdo de Tejada, who was afterwards elected to that office to serve the unexpired term.

General Diaz refused reconciliation with this government, and, fearing trouble before the next presidential election, for Lerdo was an

active candidate, he sold his estate and left for the United States after a "*pronunciamento,*" called the "Plan of Tuxtepec," had been issued to which he gave his allegiance, if he was not the author of it. This "plan" declared a president ineligible to succeed himself. By the time the revolution was well underway in several states, General Diaz had crossed the Rio Grande at Brownsville, Texas, with forty followers. These forty men increased to four hundred in a few days and they captured Matamoros on April 2nd, 1876.

Learning that a large force had been sent after him, General Diaz decided to return south. He went to New Orleans and took a steamer from there, called the City of Habana, sailing for Vera Cruz, and passed himself off as a Cuban doctor. He was not suspected until some of the troops he had captured at Matamoros a few weeks before got on board the ship at Tampico. They immediately made arrangements to secure him on arriving at Vera Cruz. Although the ship was four miles from land, Diaz jumped overboard and attempted to swim ashore. He was picked up after nightfall in an exhausted condition, and taken on board the ship again. However the purser was won to his cause and concealed him in a wardrobe, where he remained

for several days, while the Mexican officers assembled in the same room each night to play cards. Arrived at Vera Cruz, the purser still befriended him, and he got ashore in a launch loaded with cargo, disguised as a Mexican sailor, while a detachment of soldiers in boats was watching for him.

Returning to Oaxaca, as on all similar occasions, he soon had a considerable army of "Porfiristas" and after one decisive victory over the "Lerdistas," at Huamantla, President Lerdo fled, and Diaz assumed the provisional presidency upon his triumphal entry into the ancient and historic capital on November 24th, 1876. Since that time he has occupied that high office continuously except for an interval of four years from 1880 to 1884, when Manuel Gonzalez, his friend and staunch partisan, held the title. Diaz had himself become a victim of the "Tuxtepec" plan forbidding two consecutive terms and gracefully retired, although urged by a large following to remain at the head of the government. Even during the four years of Gonzalez' administration the ex-president was not idle, but served in the cabinet, as governor of Oaxáca and senator from Morelas. Since that first election of President Diaz there have been only a few scattered disturbances. When chosen

the second time in 1884 General Diaz received fifteen thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine out of sixteen thousand four hundred and sixty-two votes cast under the Mexican electoral system. On December 1st, 1904, President Diaz was inaugurated president for the sixth consecutive term, or seventh term in all. As the length of the office was extended to six years he will remain president until 1910, should he be spared that long.

Judging this man at a distance, we, who live in a country where even a third term is a "bogie," are inclined to smile at these successive elections to the presidency and dismiss the matter with the charge of "dictator" and "republican despot," with all the odium that those terms imply. President Diaz is both. But, above all, he is a true patriot. Whatever may have been his original motives in seeking this high office his actions since election prove the statement. Some think that a great transformation has taken place in his soul. That may be true, for responsibility will often develop a man. In securing the presidency by driving out Lerdo and assuming the provisional presidency over Iglesias, President of the Supreme Court, which was the office designated by the constitution, he only did what many had done before.

Mr. C. F. Lummis[1] quotes President Diaz as follows and it best expresses my own views of his attitude: — "It needed something of the strong hand. But every year it could relax. Now, although there are some who do not love 'Porfirio,' all love peace. So the fist is wide open. There is full liberty — free schools, free ballot, free speech, free press. They may do what they will, so that they do not fire a gun at me."

Immediately upon first assuming the executive office after the flight of Lerdo, Diaz issued a statement in which he set forth in clear terms his intention to restore constitutional order and institute reforms, and invited all factions and cliques to coöperate with him. This soon won the regard of the intelligent and honest partisans of all factions, and he early showed his impartiality by selecting his advisers irrespective of party. By this skilful handling of the leaders, he secured the good will of congress in furthering his plans for reforms and organizing the finances on a better basis. It was some time before some of the Lerdistas and Juaristas were won over, and there were a few minor disturbances during his first term but they never assumed such proportions that martial law had to be declared. New treaties were negotiated

[1] In the "Awakening of a Nation."

with foreign nations and able diplomatic representatives sent abroad.

I do not subscribe to the doctrine of Shakespeare that all the world is a stage and that each person is a player, for that would take away sincerity. President Diaz has been accused of only acting a part. He can not always be acting, for his course has been too consistent. It has been logical from the very first step, when, as a young man, he refused pay for military services because the government was so poor. He declined promotion over the heads of men older in the service for fear of jealousies. He refused remuneration after the close of the war of intervention. He turned a deaf ear to the emissaries of Maximilian, who wanted to place him in command of the Mexican army when that ruler abdicated, which would practically have made him president. He was a humane man as is shown by his treatment of prisoners. He disregards ceremony as much as is possible in a Latin country. He declined to live in the National Palace, but resides in a private house the most of the time, and at Chapultepec a part of the year.

President Diaz is a democratic sort of man, easy of approach and impresses his sincerity on all those who talk with him. He is taller than the average Mexican, and slender, and shows his

Indian blood in his face and carriage. He is a tireless worker and methodical in his habits, retiring at ten, and rising at six o'clock. He is abstemious, and it is probably due to this characteristic and his methodical habits, that he is at seventy-six, as active and energetic as almost any man of middle age. He will do more than he asks of others. He keeps in touch with the most remote parts of the republic, even to the most distant village. His advisers are often surprised at the vast knowledge he displays of all matters of state.

Porfirio Diaz has shown himself to be an ideal husband and father. He has been twice married. His first wife was Delfina Ortega y Reyes who died in 1880 before sharing in the full greatness of her husband, leaving a son and two daughters. Three years later he was married to a daughter of Romero Rubio, whose full name is now Señora Doña Carmen Romero Rubio de Diaz. She is a woman who by her sweetness of character, kindly disposition and charities has won a warm place in the affections of the Mexican people who call her "Carmelita," a term of endearment. The president and wife ride together without guards, and walk to church in a very unostentatious way. They have both become enthusiastic devotees of the

automobile, and generally ride in a large American touring car.

What has Diaz accomplished? It would require a long enumeration to give these in detail. Those were indeed troublous times in Mexico while we were celebrating the centennial of our independence. The strong spirit of Juarez had been broken by the long strain from 1857 to 1872, during which time he was nominally president. His successor was a weak, ambitious man who accomplished little. Disorder everywhere, the country overrun with bandits and a worse than empty treasury were the conditions when Diaz grasped the reins. It was not until nearly two years afterward that his government was formally recognized by the United States. Few men could have steered the country through such a state of affairs so successfully. He did it without repudiating any valid claims. He established credit by paying foreign obligations rather than the salaries of government employees. He surrounded himself with an able cabinet, and started the machinery of government in a business-like way.

Liberal railway concessions were granted and every encouragement given to manufactures, agriculture and mining. A modern system of public schools was established. "Down with

the *alcabales*" had been the cry for decades. These were abolished in 1896. Currency reform had been agitated for a long time because the unstable value of silver was a constant source of trouble. This was done in 1905 and a gold standard established on the basis of one gold dollar for two silver pesos. This currency reform, it was predicted, would cause great distress. It did embarrass the silver industry a little but no mines were compelled to shut down. Few men could have steered the country safely through the monetary crisis caused by the fall of silver in the nineties, and then successfully have brought it around to a gold standard. Able assistance has been rendered by that master of finance who has so long served as Minister of Finance, Jose Y. Limantour. The government has acquired control of nearly two-thirds of the entire railroad mileage by actual purchase.

These are a few of the things that have been accomplished by this man who was not only great in war but is greater in peace. It is a long and an honourable record. President Diaz is a firm believer in a personal, military and centralized government, and he is probably right when the character of the population is considered.

CHAPTER XXI

THE DAWN OF BETTER DAYS

THE old-fashioned Don accustomed to ox-carts, wooden ploughs, and a horde of men ready to serve him, no doubt views with dismay the changes being wrought through steam and railways. The younger generations have been educated abroad, or in the states, and rather welcome the innovations. The spirit of revolution and political unrest that prevailed for the first sixty years of the republic, during which time there were fifty-four changes in the executive, has passed away. Education and immigration have worked wonders in the country, and, above all, the establishment of a government that commanded obedience at home and respect abroad is responsible for the mutation in Mexico. Although an absolute republic and under a strong guiding hand, yet the people are happy and prosperous. It is the family government applied to the state for it is very paternal in its rule.

Mexico is a human country and is not without its faults. The greatest of these are, however, the result of conditions for which the present generation of nation-builders is not responsible. A transformation can not be wrought in a decade nor in a generation. And yet the real accomplishments of the past twenty years in Mexico are marvellous. Americans who have lived there during that time wax eloquent in describing the great change for the better. Whereas formerly people hesitated to invest money for fear of political changes, now investments are as safe there as in any other country, and Mexican securities have a fixed value on the bourses of the world.

Modern luxuries and conveniences are being introduced everywhere. The people are simply installing in a hurry the things that other countries have been acquiring for the half of a century. Every city is bestirring herself, and electric light plants, modern sewerage systems and water works are being constructed as rapidly as things can move in this land of procrastination. Old crude methods of power are being replaced by modern up-to-date machinery in mines and manufactures. Electric railways are replacing the mule tram lines, and the merry hum of the trolley is fast succeeding the bray of

the long-eared motor just mentioned. Mexico lagged behind so long that she has had quite a distance to go, and it will be a long while before she can entirely catch up with the head of the procession. Material wealth is increasing. Better wages are paid and the surplus is being expended for more and better goods. The wants of the great bulk of the people are so few, that it must be a long time before there will be a great change in their method of living, but their children are being educated, and that in itself works wonders in their uplifting.

The improvement in high places is just as remarkable. It used to be said that every Mexican official had his price. The story is told of an American who wanted to bribe a governor of a state several years ago.

"I will give you five thousand dollars and nothing need ever be known about it," said the briber.

"Make it ten thousand dollars and you can tell the world," replied the governor.

To-day I do not believe that any country is more free from graft in high places than our southern neighbour. The President is a man whose integrity is unimpeachable and he is a keen discerner of men, and surrounds himself with able and honest advisers. The governors

of most of the states are of high character and command respect. The days of the old grafters have passed away, and a different class of men who can be trusted have taken their place.

It is difficult to do justice to the innate courtesy of officials and people when Americans sometimes show them so little. The Mexican is polite to his servants as well as to his equals and superiors. You can murder his beloved Spanish in attempting to address him; and he will listen with infinite patience and with never a smile of amusement or expression of vexation on his face. It speaks well for their good nature that Americans are treated so well as they are, when there are so many rude and churlish representatives of this country engaged in business there.

For almost twenty years the finances of the government have shown a surplus. What a contrast to all the years of the republic before that time. In 1876, when Diaz first became president, the total revenue of the government was but $19,000,000. For the year 1905-6 this had increased to $102,000,000. From an annual deficit a surplus was evolved which reached $5,000,000 in 1895, but had grown to $20,000,000 for 1906. The total surplus in the treasury at the present time amounts to almost

$80,000,000, Mexican. This statement shows a healthy condition of affairs. The government now finds willing buyers for its bonds and all its obligations are met promptly.

Finance Minister Limantour has proven himself to be a wizard of finance, and his reputation extends to every financial centre in the world. He himself is a highly-educated, modest and retiring man, who finds his recreation in the library or at the piano. Establishing the gold standard was a great achievement. Just a few years ago Mexican silver varied from $2.05 to $2.40 for a gold dollar and all business was unsettled as a result. Now the government has established a rate of exchange of two silver dollars for one of gold, and all this was done without any friction or disturbance. Under the banking laws established by him banks and their circulation have greatly increased. In 1893 there were only eight banks in the entire country. Now there are five strong institutions in the capital and more than sixty in the entire republic. They have a circulation of nearly $100,000,000 and a capital in excess of that sum.

The exports and imports are growing at a rapid rate. The total exports for the year 1905 were $193,000,000 of which more than

$100,000,000 were of minerals. The imports for the same period were $86,000,000 gold value. Of these imports $11,000,000 was for machinery, and an equal amount for articles classed as dry goods. By far the largest proportion of both exports and imports was with the United States. The latest report from the United States Bureau of Statistics, which was for the year 1906, showed exports from the United States to Mexico amounting to $62,273,845, an increase of nearly eleven million dollars over the previous year. The exports to the United States, exclusive of minerals, for the same period were $42,000,000, which was a slight increase. Mexico is now fostering new industries by a protective tariff, and English and German manufacturers of cotton goods are feeling the effect in their trade.

The development of the water power of the republic is now commanding considerable attention. The greatest undertaking attempted as yet, is that which is now nearly finished in which the Necaxa falls are utilized. The transmission lines reach a length of one hundred and seventy-one miles. When complete this plant will have a capacity of two hundred thousand horse power, and will supply the City of Mexico, Puebla and other cities with cheap and

unlimited power. Other waterfalls are awaiting development and it may be that the energy of nature will supply the great need of Mexico for a cheap and satisfactory power to develop her other resources.

After Diaz, what? is the question that is being asked in Mexico and elsewhere. The strong arm of the leader will fall sooner or later. I believe that Mexico will continue in the progress she has so auspiciously begun. She has learned too well the benefits of tranquillity to retreat and a generation has grown up under peace. They have neither the taste, nor the training, for war and revolution is no longer a profession. Besides, the railroad, telephone and telegraph give facilities for suppressing disorder in its incipiency which did not exist before. The vice-presidency has been restored, and an able statesman and warm friend of the United States now fills that office. He is the Hon. Ramon Corral, and he is looked upon as the man chosen by President Diaz himself as his successor.

The republic of Mexico has passed through dark days but has come forth into the light. It has suffered from the evil government of foreigners and from the reckless ambitions of its own rulers. Through these trials it has emerged

wiser because of the lessons of adversity. The burdens of former mistakes still remain, and there is a lingering distrust of the powerful republic at the north in many places. But the republic is young, and will outgrow these hindrances to prosperity, and a more perfect understanding between the two great American nations is surely developing. American intelligence and capital have done much toward bringing about the present prosperous conditions and will do much more in the future. Mexicans will find their neighbours north of the Rio Grande ready to lend a helping hand; kindly and sympathetic in their struggle for better things; and ever watching with unselfish interest the steady progress of that country upward and onward in the development of the higher life and the material resources of the country.

To the reader who has followed this narrative to the end, I give my valediction, *a la Mexicana:*

Adios! Vaya usted con dios.

THE END.

APPENDICES

I

The following table gives the area and population of the various states, territories of Tepic and Lower California, and the Federal District; also the name of the capital and number of its inhabitants, the figures being for the year 1900: —

State.	Sq. Miles.	Population.	Capital.	Inhabitants.
Aguas Calientes,	2,950	101,910	Aguas Calientes,	35,052
Campeche,	20,087	84,218	Campeche,	17,109
Coahuila,	63,569	280,899	Saltillo,	23,936
Colima,	2,700	65,026	Colima,	20,696
Chiapas,	29,600	363,216	Tuxtla,	10,962
Chihuahua,	87,802	327,004	Chihuahua,	30,405
Durango,	42,200	371,274	Durango,	31,092
Guanajuato,	12,300	1,065,317	Guanajuato,	41,486
Guerrero,	24,996	474,594	Chilpanzingo,	7,497
Hidalgo,	8,917	603,074	Pachuca,	37,487
Jalisco,	31,846	1,137,311	Guadalajara,	101,206
Mexico,	9,247	924,457	Toluca,	25,904
Michoacan,	22,874	935,849	Morelia,	37,276
Morelos,	2,773	161,697	Cuernavaca,	9,584
Nuevo Leon,	23,592	326,940	Monterey,	62,266
Oaxaca,	35,382	947,910	Oaxaca,	35,049
Puebla,	12,204	1,024,446	Puebla,	93,521
Queretaro,	3,556	228,489	Queretaro,	33,152
San Luis Potosi,	25,316	582,486	San Luis Potosi,	61,019
Sinaloa,	33,671	296,109	Culiacan,	10,380
Sonora,	76,900	220,553	Hermosillo,	10,613
Tabasco,	10,072	158,107	San Juan Bautista,	10,543

State.	Sq. Miles.	Population.	Capital:	Inhabitants.
Tamaulipas,	32,128	220,263	Victoria,	10,086
Tlaxcala,	1,595	172,217	Tlaxcala,	2,947
Vera Cruz,	29,201	960,570	Jalapa,	20,288
Yucatan,	35,203	312,264	Merida,	43,639
Zacatecas,	24,757	496,810	Zacatecas,	33,556
Tepic,	11,257	149,677	Tepic,	15,486
Lower California,	58,328	47,082	La Paz,	5,046
Federal District,	463	530,723	City of Mexico,	344,721

II

The broken character of the surface of Mexico is shown by the many high mountain peaks which are scattered over the country. Most of these peaks are extinct volcanoes, although one of them, Colima, is in constant eruption. The following table gives the name, location and height of all the peaks over ten thousand feet in height: —

Mountain.	State.	Elevation.
Popocatepetl,	Mexico,	17,782 ft.
Orizaba,	Vera Cruz,	17,362 ft.
Ixtaccihuatl,	Puebla,	16,060 ft.
Toluca,	Mexico,	15,019 ft.
Colima,	Jalisco,	14,263 ft.
Ajusco,	Federal District,	13,650 ft.
Cofre de Perote,	Vera Cruz,	13,641 ft.
Zapotlan,	Jalisco,	12,743 ft.
Tancitaro,	Michoacan,	12,653 ft.
Zempoaltepec,	Oaxaca,	11,141 ft.
Pico de Quinco,	Michoacan,	10,900 ft.

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